

TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Important news for New Subscribers

The surest, most convenient way to get the TLS each week is to take out a subscription. Our subscription service located at the address below will provide all subscribers quickly and regularly with their weekly copy of the paper, which offers an incomparable guide to new and recent books published all over the world. New subscribers are invited to begin here, by filling in the coupon below.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The following postal zones are listed for your convenience. If your country is not included, please contact your local postal authority to ascertain your correct zone as specified by the British Post Office. United Kingdom only by surface mail.

6 months (26 Issues) £12.50
12 months (52 Issues) £25.00

British Postal Zone 'A' Including Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.
6 months (26 Issues) £23.66
12 months (52 Issues) £47.32

British Postal Zone 'B' Including Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
6 months (26 Issues) £26.52
12 months (52 Issues) £53.04

British Postal Zone 'C' Including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan.
6 months (26 Issues) £29.12
12 months (52 Issues) £58.24

Europe including Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
6 months (26 Issues) £21.06
12 months (52 Issues) £42.12

USA and Canada by air.
6 months (26 Issues) US\$35.00
12 months (52 Issues) US\$70.00

Please send me The Times Literary Supplement

☐ 6 months ☐ 12 months

Please print

NAME

ADDRESS

I enclose my cheque for £/US\$ made payable to Times Newspapers Ltd

Signature

Date

Return this coupon to Times Newspapers Ltd, Supplements Subscription Manager, Oakfield House, 35 Ferry Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Priority House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX
SEPTEMBER 30 1983

Art 1063	Literary Criticism 1039, 1065
Biography 1038, 1057-8	Medieval History 1040
Children's Books 1045-56	Modern History 1064
China 1060	Poetry 1061
Commentary 1041-3	Politics 1062
Fiction 1037, 1059	Sport 1067
Language 1035-6	United States 1066

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

(Titles of children's books are listed on page 1056)

BERLIN, IRA, and RONALD HOFFMAN (Editors)	<i>Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution</i> [John White]
BIGGS, JULIA	<i>This Stage-Play World: English Literature and its background 1580-1625</i> [William Lamont]
BROWN, ARCHIE, and MICHAEL KASER (Editors)	<i>Soviet Policy for the 1980s</i> [Karen Dawisha]
CLANCHY, M. T.	<i>England and its Rulers 1066-1272: Foreign Lordship and National Identity</i> [W. L. Warren]
CORTZEE, J. M.	<i>Life and Times of Michael K.</i> [D. J. Enright]
DE ROLA, STANISLAS KLOSSOWSKI	<i>Balthus</i> [R. S. Short]
DERRIDA, JACQUES	<i>Margins of Philosophy</i> [A. C. Danto]
ELLIOT, ALISTAIR	<i>Talking Back</i> [Alan Hollinghurst]
FORD, FORD MADDOX	<i>The English Novel: From the earliest days to the death of Joseph Conrad</i> [Adam Mars-Jones]
FORD, FORD MADDOX	<i>The Rash Act</i> [Anthony Fothergill]
FUCHSER, LARRY WILLIAM	<i>Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement: A study in the politics of history</i> [John P. Fox]
GLENDINNING, VICTORIA	<i>Vita: The Life of V. Sackville-West</i> [Michael Holroyd]
GREENBLATT, STEPHEN (Editor)	<i>The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance</i> [Graham Bradshaw]
HARASZTI, EVA H.	<i>The Invaders: Hitler Occupies The Rhineland</i> [James Joll]
HOLLOWAY, DAVID	<i>The Soviet Union and the Arms Race</i> [Karen Dawisha]
HUGHES, JOAN, and W. S. RAMSON	<i>Poetry of The Stewart Court</i> [Denton Fox]
KAMINSKY, HOWARD	<i>Simon de Cramaud and the Great Schism</i> [P. S. Lewis]
KEANE, MOLLY	<i>Time After Time</i> [Joy Grant]
KENNER, HUGH	<i>A Colder Eye: The Modern Irish Writers</i> [Michael Mason]
LEAFMAN, MICHAEL	<i>The Companion Guide to New York</i> [Christopher Hitchens]
LENCZOWSKI, JOHN	<i>Soviet Perceptions of U. S. Foreign Policy: A Study of Ideology, Power, and Consensus</i> [Karen Dawisha]
LEYER, JANET	<i>Soccer Madness</i> [Brian Glanville]
LEYMARIE, JEAN	<i>Balthus</i> [R. S. Short]
LINDBERG-SVEYSTED, BIRTA (Editor)	<i>Pound/Pound: The Story of a Literary Friendship</i> [Alan Jenkins]
LIVELY, PENELOPE	<i>Perfect Happiness</i> [Joanna Motion]
MAP, WALTER	<i>De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles</i> [J. A. Burrow]
MACCAIG, NORMAN	<i>A World of Difference</i> [James Campbell]
McMURRY, RICHARD M.	<i>John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence</i> [William S. McFeely]
MICHEL, JAMES	<i>New and Selected Poems</i> [Alan Hollinghurst]
MURPHY, JOHN F.	<i>The United Nations and the Control of International Violence: A legal and political analysis</i> [Geoffrey Best]
NAIPAU, SHIVA	<i>A Hot Country</i> [Nicholas Rankin]
PÉCHEUX, MICHEL	<i>Language, Semantics and Ideology</i> [Geoffrey Sampson]
READING, PETER	<i>Diploic</i> [Gavin Ewart]
ROSS, ALAN	<i>Ranji: Prince of Cricketers</i> [P. H. Sutcliffe]
SETH-SMITH, MICHAEL	<i>A Classic Connection: The friendship of the Earl of Derby and the Hon George Lambton, 1893-1945</i> [Roger Longrigg]
SEWELL, BROCARD	<i>In the Dorian Mode: A life of John Galsworthy, 1866-1933</i> [Timothy d'Arch Smith]
SHORT, K. R. M. (Editor)	<i>Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II</i> [Ian Kershaw]
THAXTON, RALPH	<i>China Turned Rightside Up: Revolutionary legitimacy in the peasant world</i> [Lucien Bianco]
WATSON, PETER	<i>Double-Dealer</i> [William Molyn-Owen]
WATTS, CEDRIC	<i>R. B. Cunningham Graham</i> [Donald Campbell]
WICKER, ERWIN	<i>The Middle Kingdom: Inside China today</i> [Della Davis]
WRIGHT, KIT	<i>Bump-Starting the Heats</i> [Gavin Ewart]
COMMENTARY	
Exhibitions: <i>Bricks and Bees</i> (Heinz Gallery) [J. M. Richards]	
Radio: <i>Matthew Smith</i> (Barbican Art Gallery) [Frances Spalding]	
Radio: <i>Towards the End of the Morning and After Leaving Mr MacKenzie</i> (Radio 4) [Peter Kemp]	
Theatre: <i>David Mamet: Glengarry Glen Ross</i> (Cottesloe Theatre) [Ronald Hayman]	
Behind the Lines: Robert Hewison	
Author: Anthony	
Fifty years on: Criminal proceedings: T. J. Blyton	
Crownword	
Fleet by Peter Porter	
Letters on Henry Stubbe, Schopenhauer, Soviet Policy and Ideology, etc.	
Among this week's contributors	

LANGUAGE

Writing and its spokesman

A. C. Danto

JACQUES DERRIDA
Margins of Philosophy
Translated by Alan Bass
300pp. Brighton: Harvester Press. £25.
0 7106 0454 7

Jacques Derrida has been embraced with a dazzled admiration by our humanistic literati, but by the Anglo-American philosopher he is viewed with a curiosity at best tepid, across a chilly, suspicious distance. Given the values of the profession, this *foldure* is easily understood: Derrida's prose communicates an instant conviction of acute, perhaps absolute frivolity; he is conceded even by his enthusiasts to be a critic rather than a philosopher; and his enterprise is widely if vaguely identified as the deconstruction of philosophy, something we scarcely need import if it means what it is thought to mean, since the history of analytical philosophy, from the Pragmatists through Wittgenstein and the Postivists to Richard Rorty, is a chronicle of self-administered autopsies.

But beyond this, the alarming component of the literary Derridianism does not encourage closer acquaintance, for these appear less to be pursuing an intellectual programme than displaying the grave symptoms of having swallowed a pharmacopoeia: uttering agential obscurities, preferring puns to arguments, insinuating phallic motivations with broad Freudian winks, wallowing in impossible etymologies as a form of wit, and foregoing the sweet certainties of English for what look like transcriptions of primary processes—as though writing were a form of learned gaff, a way of ruining paper. Acceptance seems to consist in imitation, as though style and substance were one. Philosophy may indeed be doing, but it at least is a death with dignity.

Now it is not, I think, difficult to explain both the impact and its form. In the middle and late 1960s, literary study was under double attack. From the one flank it was put down as much the intellectual inferior of the two cultures, from the other it was branded, in the radical idiom of the era, as irrelevant. Three amazing books by Derrida appeared in 1967: *La Voix et le phénomène*, *L'écriture et la différence*, and, of particular moment, *De la grammatologie*. Any such explosion of brilliant writing would

confer an instant fame, but the common theme promised a double salvation to the embattled disciplines. Writing as such—*l'écriture*—which after all is the special province of the literati, was proclaimed the defining human endeavour, almost as though man were an inscripational being whose true identity had been concealed from him, since writing itself has been the historical victim of a vast conspiracy of repression, otherwise known as the history of philosophy. From Plato to Heidegger, philosophy has been a masquerade ideology in political promotion of something Derrida calls *logocentrism*, which flourishes at the expense of writing. He now proposes a new science, grammatology, which is to do for writing what hegs comparison with what Franz Fanon proposed to do for the Third World. By becoming grammatologists, the literati thus become scientists, and the *rupture* (as they would say) between the two cultures is *erased* (as they would say). But the newly deputized grammatologists might also place their own liberationist demand on the same front as those other struggles for minority recognition, freeing writing from three millennia of oppression. Giving them political and scientific respectability at once, it would have been remarkable had Derrida not been received as a prophet.

Now little in the advanced formal education of the literary scholar particularly equipped him to follow, let alone criticize Derrida who, a *normalien* *parmi normaliens*, is in fact in perfect mastery of the difficult texts he, but not his emulators, takes for granted as he executes his extravagant and allusive improvisations. There was nothing then to do but take over the mannerisms, with I should suppose disastrous consequences for the curriculum, since students have less resistance than their teachers, who have only a set of postures to transmit. Meanwhile, in the rush to enlist in the army of deconstruction, it was perhaps overlooked that Derrida had so widened the notion of writing that literature as such, unless proportionately widened, is a very small part of it; that grammatology, to the degree that it exists as a science, must include physics if the universe can be regarded as a kind of writing—a "message" written in a cosmic code—as Heinz Pagels maintains; and that speech, in whose cause writing is said to have been disenfranchised, must,

under the generalization, itself be a form of writing, as Derrida concedes. But if "Oral language already belongs to this language," as he says in *Grammatology*, the distinction he requires in order to get the historical analysis he requires, is deconstructed from within, and it is no longer clear to what degree it can be accepted. Derrida's texts leave the enterprise of literary study precisely where it was at the moment of salvation. Bitter disillusion! Of course the division between the two cultures has disintegrated since and through Kuhn, and the cry for relevance has gone the way of a political fad.

In view of this unifying narrative, it may be wondered whether there is any reason for analytical philosophy, whose self-confidence is currently not high, to overcome a natural distaste and look more deeply into this singular writer. The answer, I think, is not even a very highly qualified yes, and there is perhaps no better place to begin than with *Margins of Philosophy*, which belongs to Derrida's middle period, as one of again three works to have appeared all in the same year, 1972. It assembles pieces which mainly appeared elsewhere, and indeed seven of its eleven writings have already been translated by other hands into such English as Derrida is capable of. Why the publishers did not gather these rather than commission an altogether new translation of all of them by Alan Bass, is perhaps not a significant mystery. The density of Derridian inscription in any case raises such problems for translation, with its eccentric terminology, its oblique and overdetermined references, its inscripational punning across various languages, and the staggering vitiation of its erudition apparatus, that we must be grateful for those who find fulfillment in this labour, and I simply want to praise Dr Bass for having made this book as accessible as he has. It is in my view Derrida's best writing, and certainly his most philosophical, so if philosophers find it unrewarding, they are little likely to derive much profit from the wider corpus unless, as specialists, they should be driven to come to terms with what he says of one or another historical figure: Plato, or Rousseau, or Condillac, or whoever.

I would not begin at the beginning, with the typographically bizarre and self-indulgent "Tympant," which offers itself, through a strained analogy with the eardrum, as a prefatory vestibule,

and which anticipates the increasing idiosyncrasy of Derrida's later style. Nor even with the first essay, "Différance," where a willed mis-inscription of an "a" for an "e" directs us to perhaps the most original piece of philosophizing Derrida has produced to date, namely a kind of ontological discussion of what it is to be an inscripational being, "différance" (with an "a") being a gerund designating a process of differing and deferring, and best understood on the model of *naturans* in Spinoza's powerful concept of *natura naturans*. An uncouth alternative would be "languageing," if we understand language as Saussure did, as a system of differences: difference is the dynamism of making thoughts. Rather, I would begin with the last essay, "Signature Event Context," where the analyst will find himself on surprisingly familiar ground, as it deals with the still mooted theories of J. L. Austin.

Austin's generative thought was that language, traditionally treated as descriptive and hence largely as representational by philosophers obsessed with bringing sentences (or thoughts) into correspondence with facts, is also, and perhaps dominantly, a performative instrument and the vehicle of a kind of action. Waving the banner of what Austin termed "The Descriptive Fallacy," philosophers of ordinary language set about trying to demonstrate that a great many, perhaps all philosophical problems, were due to the mistake of looking for the designation of certain crucial terms rather than to their use in acts of speech. Combatting what Derrida would call a "logocentric prejudice," they were grammatologists *avant la lettre*. So Austin is lauded here for "having exploded the concept of communication as a purely semiotic, linguistic, or symbolic concept." Nevertheless, the concept exploded is required in order to detonate the charge, and so, Derrida argues, performativity is finally dependent on descriptivity. Consider the familiar example: *when someone says 'I promise' he is not describing but doing something, promising consisting in saying 'I promise'.* But I have just in effect said "I promise" without making any promise at all, simply showing with what instrument of language it is done, but thinking primarily of stage-actors, dismisses them as parasitic in order to get on with his analysis. But Derrida

insists that if saying something is what an action consists in, well, there must be a rule under which saying is transformed into doing; and the rule must cite the expression. Rather than citation being dependent on performance, the dependency is the other way round: no citations, no performances.

Now this is very intelligent criticism, and an elegant example of a deconstruction, understood as a demonstration that a thesis actually requires as one of its conditions the very thing it means to reject. So it goes considerably deeper than the characteristic analytical effort to find counter-examples, since it treats the thesis in terms of some total system, and illuminates its presuppositions. The question is not whether there are speech acts, though it would not be Derrida if he did not, implicitly, pretend that there might be none, but that "these effects do not exclude what is generally opposed to them term by term, but on the contrary presuppose it, as the general space of their possibility."

The kind of difficulty he finds in Austin parallels the difficulty he finds in Lévi-Strauss—*"Whether he wants to or not—this does not depend on a decision on his part—the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he denounces them."* It is paralleled by whatever critique he offers of whatever thinker: to use a guarded analogy with psychoanalysis, it is like the Oedipus complex, which may be the invariant basis of each neurosis, but since its disguises are infinite and fantastic, each patient must be treated differently. "We can produce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest." Derrida wrote in *Writing and Difference*, where he added: "The step outside philosophy is much more difficult to conceive than is generally imagined by those who think they made it long ago with cavalier ease."

Margins of Philosophy is a series of applications of this thought, differing only in the degree of ingenuity required to expose the knot of paradox which holds the threads of the various texts together. There is a brilliant criticism, for example, of the linguist Émile Benveniste, who had sought,

CAMBRIDGE PAPERBACK LIBRARY

Titles published 29 September

Word and Image

French Painting of the Ancien Régime

NORMAN BRYSON

Winner of the most distinguished European prize for art history, the Prix de la Confédération Internationale des Négoceants en Œuvres d'Art.

This is an important book, and its importance is twofold: first in the context of the history of art, and second in the brilliance and originality of his analyses of the paintings.

French Studies
Paperback £9.95 net

The Dark Side of the Landscape

The Rural Poet in English Painting 1730-1840

JOHN BARRELL

Focusing on the work of Gainsborough, Morland and Constable, this book shows why the rural poet began to interest eighteenth-century English painters, and examines the ways in which they could be represented so as to be an acceptable part of the decor of the salons of the rich.

Paperback £7.95 net

Threshold of a Nation

A Study in English and Irish Drama

PHILIP EDWARDS

Professor Edwards's superb new study is divided into two sections, each chapter is devoted to the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline drama and three to the Irish theatre in this century. Throughout, the focus is on the complex relationship between the drama and the nation, which he illuminates with an impressive knowledge of the literature of the period.

The Times Higher Education Supplement
Paperback £5.50 net

Structuralism or criticism?

Thoughts on How We Read

GEOFFREY STRICKLAND

An important critique of contemporary French structuralism and its value to literary studies. The book is particularly original in the way it ranges widely over both French and English criticism and literary theory.

Paperback £6.95 net

A Rhetoric of the Unreal

Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic

CHRISTINE BROOKE-ROSE

Studies a wide range of fiction, from fairy-tales to science fiction, to show how the term 'fantastic' has often been applied. Christine Brooke-Rose examines the essential difference between these types of narrative and the background of realistic fiction.

Paperback £6.95 net

Studies in Aeschylus

R. P. WINNINGTON-INGRAM

A consideration of the problems in Aeschylus' plays from his earlier works (*Perseus, Septem contra Thebes* and the *Danaiad trilogy*) through to the *Oresteia* and *Prometheus Bound*, providing a comprehensive view of Aeschylus' thought and contribution to the development of Greek religious thought.

Hardcover £25.00 net
Paperback £9.95 net

Donizetti and his operas

WILLIAM ASHBROOK

Includes a chronological and descriptive survey of all sixty-five completed operas.

I recommend William Ashbrook's volume on Donizetti without reservation of any sort. It is now the definitive work on this composer... buy it and you need buy no other.

Robert Hartford, *Punch*
Paperback £9.95 net

Capitalism and the State in Modern France

Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century

RICHARD F. KUISEL

For all those who are nowadays concerned with the problems of economic management Kuise's book should be essential reading. Kuise's is able to show the sources of the change in the thinking of the critics, the failures and the achievements of the first half of the century, and to find in them the explanation of the imperatives which drove post-war France toward renovation and growth.

The Times Higher Education Supplement
Paperback £9.50 net

History of the Balkans

Volume 1: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Volume 2: Twentieth Century

BARBARA JELAVICH

These two volumes examine a key area in the recent history of Europe, considering the successes and failures of national movements, the place of the Balkans in international relations, wars and crises, and the establishment and development of the post-war regimes.

Each Volume Hard cover £25.00 net
Paperback £9.95 net

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

commentary

Unfair to middling

Peter Kemp

MICHAEL FRAYN
Towards the End of the Morning
JEAN RHYS
After Leaving Mr MacKenzie
Radio 4

As its title indicates, Michael Frayn's *Towards the End of the Morning* looks at early middle age. Revolving round newspaper offices and television studios, it also surveys media middlemen. And with sprightly acceptance, it shows the middling achievements high youthful ambitions can find themselves having to settle for. In Frayn's novel, marriages aren't quite what partners hoped they'd be; lovers are half-resignedly aware of each other's drawbacks; jobs and houses fall emphatically short of expectations. The book ends with a brash young kid publicly repeating the word "sure", but, privately, most of its characters are extremely unsure. Getting on chronologically, though not professionally, they heap up routine to shut out intimations of mortality. The messy minutiae of preparing a newspaper for the presses, a television programme for the cameras, are, in this novel, both gaudy with sardonic gusto and respected as a means of fending off queasy thoughts of ageing and death.

Never really catching the book's wavelenght, Geoffrey M. Matthews's adaptation presented the piece as not much more than a strident satire on the media. Turned into a radio play, the work became at once blurred and louder. None of the wry melancholia - "He had been young all his life, and now suddenly youth seemed to be leaving out of him" - was picked up. Instead, an expert cast - from Martin Jarvis, all naive uncertainty as a Fleet Street man with an eye on television celebrity, to Penella Fielding, in fine

smoky vocal fettle as a fading *femme fatale* - had to make do with a script not far above the level of that for some situation comedy. Frayn's weakness for dialogue over-dependent on catch-phrases was gratefully amplified into farce. His novel's strengths were feebly represented: none of its pervading sense of the bleakness behind the busy-ness, none of its wistful, down-to-earth recognition of the way time can clip hopes.

Far more successful was David Marshall's version of *After Leaving Mr MacKenzie* - a book which, far from taking a resignedly cheery attitude towards life's limitations, presents a typically *risqué* account of someone who can't do this. Highly visual and featuring a heroine who is hypersensitive to the ways people look at her, the novel hardly seems promising material for a radio play. Yet, in the event, the adaptation was compelling - largely due to a performance of virtuoso delicacy from Dorothy Tutin, surrounded by a number of perceptively portrayed smaller roles.

As with all Jean Rhys's fiction, *After Leaving Mr MacKenzie* operates through opposites. Julia, the protagonist, looks gaudy but is forlorn. Fecklessly bohemian, she flutters feebly round tough, prudent bourgeois males. Peniless and vaguely disreputable, she vainly solicits help from the moneyed and the conventional. The narrative charts her wandering, tremulous attempts to achieve stability. Leaving MacKenzie, the man who's kept her, and Paris, the city where she's lived, she trails - half-hopefully, half-disconsolately - back to London and her family. Finding no support here, she strays wistfully, as the story ends, back to her Parisian haunts and parasitic ways.

All of this was brought quiveringly to life by Dorothy Tutin. Skillfully and sympathetically, she caught all the nervy shifts of Julia's character. Wheelings switched into wheelings -

away as self-respect briefly and pathetically flared. The voice hardened with temporary, febrile bravado, then slackened into a slight slur as Pernod or self-pity thickened it. Particularly effective were the scenes where Julia, hoping to establish some warmer rapport, is doled out cold comfort by her sister, Norah. Being snubbed when vulnerable, repelled by the repellently respectable, is an especial dread in Rhys's books. And here, as Julia was rebuffed by the off-handed callousness of Norah - played with flinty briskness by Isabel Dean - there was a powerful and painful sense of emotional bruising. Adeptly capturing the nature of the Rhys heroine - part touching and part clinging - the play also gave a vivid impression of the terrain round which she roams. Careful sound-effects and adroitly used music atmospherically evoked a characteristic Jean Rhys world of sad cafés, lonely streets, the boxy bedrooms and thinly-carpeted corridors of cheap hotels.

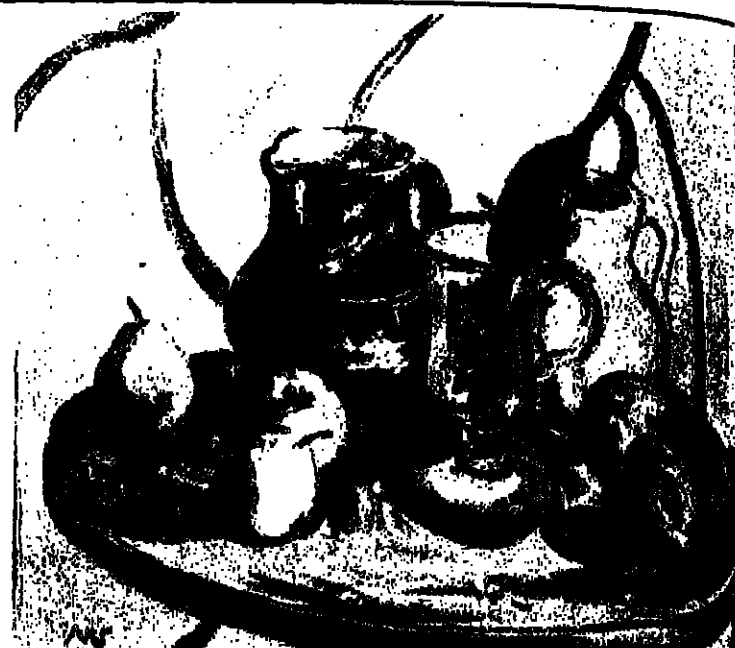
Following the lead

Ronald Hayman

DAVID MAMET
Glengarry Glen Ross
Cottesloe Theatre

As a virtuoso of theatrical invective, David Mamet surpasses even Edward Albee, who conceded that Mamet had a fine ear, but complained that there was no sign of a fine mind. Ostensibly rallying to Mamet's defence, Ruby Cohn has declared that a fine mind is just what he has, a mind so fine (as Eliot said of Henry James's) that no idea can violate it. Wary of American reactions to his work, Mamet has given his new play to the National Theatre, where he has collaborated on sandpapering the dialogue with the director Bill Bryden and seven of the actors who regularly work with Bryden. The excellent play which results disproves both American charges.

The characters have no time for ideas which can't be measured in dollars, but the action has enormous resonance. Cleverly and disturbingly, Mamet plays with the idea that the difference between robbery and Chicago salesmanship is only a difference of degree. These hard-



"Still Life with Jugs and Fruit", c.1938, a painting (from the collection of the Queen Mother) in the Matthew Smith exhibition reviewed on the preceding page.

boiled real-estate salesmen have no moral scruples; and what they are selling has no value - tracts of undeveloped land which cannot be developed. The only commodity that has value - for them - is the "lead", the contact with the potential buyer. Some leads are valuable, the value of the lead depending on the wealth and gullibility of the client.

In distilling an oppressive theatrical poetry out of the transactions between deceiver and dupe, the play has affinities with *The Alchemist*, but an essential difference is that Mamet's men are not delinquent mavericks but programmed parts of a system in which the incentives are commission and such bonuses as a free Cadillac, while the deterrent is dismissal. Nor is there any indication of a superior moral force: the representatives of authority are unscrupulous and corruptible - a bullying cop and a sly office manager.

The nexus between robbery and salesmanship was one of the themes in Mamet's 1977 play *American Buffalo*, which was seen at the Cottesloe the following year in Bill Bryden's production, and which prefigures *Glengarry Glen Ross* in making much of the plot revolve around changes of plan in a carefully organized crime. It is conducive to the development of the central idea that plotting bulks large in

the plot, but the play, unlike the crime, is plotted well.

It looks at first as though the play will take the form of a series of set duologues. The set for the first act is a Chinese restaurant with three tables in it, and the duologue at the first table is a good deal longer than it needs to be, though it has some very funny moments, which are fully exploited by Derek Newark as Shelly, an ageing salesman, and Karl Johnson as the office manager, who dishes out the leads.

The second act is set in the office after the break-in, with boards covering the smashed window and papers littering the floor. The telephones have been stolen; a loose cop is beckoning the salesmen one by one into another room for an interrogation which is approached with anything but polite. Entertainingly, Mamet exploits the behaviour of these men in a crisis which threatens their shifty routine of earning a livelihood. One of the most revealing sequences occurs when Shelly impersonates a rich and satisfied client in order to help Richard, the youngest salesman (Jack Shepherd), to hoodwink the unsuspecting client he has been chatting up in the restaurant. This between greed for profit and sheepish devotion to the canny wife who says he must cancel the deal, the man admirably played by Tony Hayman, does not even seem to notice the broken window or the papers on the floor.

Mamet and the actors excel in exposing the stubborn desperation and the wild resourcefulness of salesmen who will stop at nothing to establish their position on the "board", the graph which plots their progress in competition with each other. Jack Shepherd and Derek Newark give their best in the performance. Richard and Shelly improvise, and Richard afterwards puts on a different kind of performance to display friendship for his client, exploding into a fit of abuse when the office manager contradicts one of the lies he has told.

Bill Bryden has never got better results from his method of working repeatedly with the same actors. In a repertoire of interruptions, the couple duologues the interrupted, the couple pauses, the exaggerated exasperation could not have been played so well if each actor had not been familiar with the tricks and timing of his partner. In the office scene Bryden uses space and lack of space extremely well, while the actors can tellingly simulate the tensions of working competitively in a team. At the same time they manage to give convincingly American performances, which is less a matter of accent than of rhythm, delivery and modulation. They are helped by the precision and incisiveness of Mamet's writing, but in this gripping play even the more tactful characters live on the verge of hysteria, and the more impassioned outbursts never seem uncontrolled.

John Evelyn, *Diary*, May 10, 1637.
3 Still, she led the too inquisitive twins away and made them join in the game of hunt-the-zipper, which had been organized by one of her colleagues at the other end of the room.
"Run along now and have your cup of caffeine solution, dear," she said to the other twins.
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chapter 14.

A copy of a confidential document has arrived on my desk which, were its authenticity not confirmed by a report in the *Bookseller*, I would have dismissed as a malevolent forgery calculated to place the Publishers' Association in ill repute. It is a copy of a bid by the Publishers' Association to extract £1 million from the Arts Council Literature Department.

The paper argues that over the past five years "the condition of Literature has become increasingly disturbing", and that not only fiction and poetry, but also history and biography are "endangered species". Many works of literary merit are failing to find publishers, or are being published at prices which put them out of the reach of the general public. The paper does not suggest that publishers might have anything to do with this state of affairs. On the contrary, the traditional view that publishers should subsidize their more literary titles out of the revenue from their bestsellers (in fact, cover their failures with their successes) is dismissed as "unrealistic".

Publishers have no obligation to subsidize literature - or to put it more bluntly, publishers must not make losses on books and therefore will not publish titles they think will be unprofitable. On the other hand, the Arts Council does have such an obligation, although as we all know, "Literature is as present poorly subsidised by the Arts Council." A scheme does exist by which publishers can apply for subsidies on individual titles, but the paper argues that it is "unrealistic" for the Arts Council to have to decide which titles merit subsidy, and "the process of selection is slow and often apparently arbitrary".

Accordingly, the Publishers' Association proposes to take the whole business out of the Arts Council's hands, and set up a Literary Investment Trust. This will be a non-profit-making body, funded by the Arts Council but also capable of receiving money from other quarters. Besides a panel of Publishers' Association Trustees will be an editorial board, "including authors, literary critics, academics and persons having experience but not active current interests in publishing".

The Trust will decide which works should be subsidized, but the books will still be published by individual commercial publishers. The direct costs of publication will be met by the Trust, plus a service charge to cover the publisher's overheads. If the book moves into profit, there is provision for this to be shared between the Trust and the publisher, the publisher never taking less than 50 per cent. It is anticipated that the Trust would back up to a hundred titles a year, and on an

average grant per title of £2,500, the Publishers' Association is looking for a commitment of £1 million over three years.

It is an ingenious scheme which, if it goes through, as seems likely, would demand a considerable increase in the Arts Council's allocation for literature (this year £875,000) unless other areas are to suffer. The Literature Panel is actively considering the scheme, before a decision this Autumn. But there are objections. The first is that this is only an inflated version of the Arts Council's existing system for subsidizing individual titles, with an added tier of management to make the "unrealistic" selections. The current scheme also has a "pay-back" clause, but no publisher is known to have returned any of his grant. The reason for this is not that the Arts Council unerringly selects unprofitable books, but the judicious juggling of overheads ensures that individual titles make a loss. The Trust, if it is to police the scheme properly, will need to employ an army of accountants.

The major objection, however, is that the Literary Investment Trust will absolve the publishing industry of any obligation to publish Literature at all. Profitable books which happen to be of literary merit will appear, of course, but the decision to invest in a writer's talent - which is rarely proved by one book alone - is taken out of the publishers' hands and placed in that of the Trust. (And who will trust the Trust?) Poetry, fiction, biography and history may be endangered species, but would it really help them to preserve a hundred titles in the Literary Investment Trust's wildlife safari park?

Next week, from October 5 to 7, Australia House in the Aldwych plays host to a special book exhibition, mounted by the Australian Book Publishers' Association. It intends to dispel "the myth of a vast cultural backwater populated by Foster-willing jacksnobs" by putting on a display of 1,000 titles published in Australia by seventy different Australian publishing houses. The Australians are rightly proud of the fact that 42 per cent of all books in Australia are "homegrown". Among the distinguished Australian publishing houses contributing to this homegrown harvest are Hodder and Stoughton, Allen and Unwin, Heinemann, McGraw-Hill, Macmillan, Methuen, Oxford University Press, Penguin Books, Readers Digest, Doubleday...

At the other end of the Strand the Institute of Contemporary Arts is preparing to hold "Art Ink '83", the first ever international fair of

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

contemporary art publications. Here the orthodox world of publishing art history, museum catalogues and art journals meets the teeming sub-culture of artists' books, where the emphasis is on the art rather than the publishing. Thames and Hudson will be showing some seventy different titles, Michael Caine will be showing Apollinaire's *The Bretonnais*, typography, illustrations and binding by Michael Caine, fifteen copies only.

The fair, from October 28 to 30, is emphatically a public event. There will be seminars on the present and future of art publishing, Ralph Steadman will be appearing as Leonardo Da Vinci, and sculptor David Mach has been commissioned to produce an artwork out of art books. His last production, the rubber-tyre submarine on the South Bank, suffered an unfortunate fate, but although the ICA occupies the pre-war German embassy, there should be no book-burning this time.

The arrival of John Fuller's *Flying to Nowhere* on the Booker Prize shortlist comes at a key moment for its publisher, the Salamander Press. In January 1981 Tom Fenton published a pamphlet of his younger brother James's poems, *A German Requiem*. It was hand-printed on an old press in Tom Fenton's Edinburgh front room, and sold for £1.50. *A German Requiem* is now a collector's item. But Tom Fenton was not looking for the preciosity of the little poetry press. Two years later there are thirty-eight titles on the Salamander list, there is no more hand printing, and Fenton has bought a computer.

Salamander's principles, however, remain the same: to produce well-designed work at a reasonable price. Fenton's models are the Nonessuch Press, for its design, and the Hogarth Press, for the literary quality of its publications. Not surprisingly, poetry has been at the centre of the list. In its first year Salamander also published Craig Raine's *A Free Translation* and Andrew Motion's *Independence*. The success of James Fenton's *The Memory of War* in 1982 made London and New York publishers pay attention. John Fuller's poems *Waiting for the Muse* were published by Salamander last year; next week they publish his *Come Aboard and Sail Away*, poems for children with illustrations by Nicholas Garland, whose *An Indian Journal* is published by Salamander on the same day.

It is impossible not to notice a certain incestuousness about the Salamander circle. John Fuller, a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, was James Fenton's tutor, and he has also taught

Andrew Motion. (Since their Salamander publications Raine has become poetry editor at Faber and Faber, and Motion poetry editor at Chatto and Windus.) Jonathan Keates, whose novel *Allegro Passifloris* was published by Salamander yesterday, was also taught by John Fuller, and he knew both Tom and James Fenton at Oxford. Nicholas Garland is an old friend of James Fenton's from the *New Statesman*.

Tom Fenton says he is "not at all worried by the 'clique' theory. How can you start off a business in your front room without publishing the work of your friends because you think it's good?" He also points out that there is an Edinburgh axis to Oxford's sortieous sphere. A young student, Kathleen Jamie, whose poems *Black Spiders* were brought out by Salamander last year, has just won a Scottish Arts Council prize. Glasgow writer Alan Spence's short stories, *Its Colours They Are Fine*, published this spring, are selling well, and there are thirteen plays on the list, including John Byrne's *Slab Boys* trilogy.

With biography, travel and even cookery books added to the list, Salamander begins to look like a full-scale publishing house, yet Tom Fenton is only now about to take on his first full-time employee. I asked him if the publicity that a Booker Prize nomination attracts might not overwhelm him. To a certain extent he is protected because Penguin are immediately releasing *Flying to Nowhere* in paperback. His Edinburgh printers can produce a hardback reprint quickly if the orders come in, though at the moment he has no full-time salesmen. He is delighted that both Fuller's novel and James Fenton's forthcoming poems *Children in Exile* should move so quickly into paperback, for the small size of his operation would otherwise hold them back. Tom Fenton hopes that Salamander's success will allow him to take on more staff, so that he can concentrate on working with his authors on the production of well-designed books. It is a simple formula that size somehow threatens.

If you are fond of that particularly English cultural cocktail, wine, cheese and poetry, then October will be a busy month, for Literary Festivals litter the country like fallen leaves. True, the

Bracknell Literature Festival has been postponed until April, following the delay in appointing a successor to Sebastian Barker as poet-in-residence at the South Hill Park Arts Centre, but scarcely a day goes by from October 9 to 20 without a workshop, a children's event, a reading or a celebrity lecture (and sometimes it's the same celebrity).

Cheltenham, the senior member, has a dense programme that balances Shakespeare, Pevensy, Jane Austen, Wilfred Owen and T.S. Eliot with feminist writing, Rastafarian poetry and Alastair Grey, whose *Unlikely Stories*, Mostly has won this year's Literature Prize. Two events, on October 13 and 14, hold out hopes for a lively exchange of views. On Thursday evening Raymond Williams delivers his lecture "Writing in the Late Twentieth Century", which is followed by a forum (post-mortem?) conducted by Malcolm Bradbury, David Hare and Libby Houston. Raymond Williams may himself reply. On the Friday Malcolm Bradbury delivers his lecture "The Modern American Novel", and is followed by a debate on "The Influence of Marxism on Literature". John Lucas, Colin McCabe and Trevor Griffiths will be refereed by John Spurling. Doubtless this will be well attended by Cheltenham employees of the Government Communications Headquarters.

Trevor Griffiths then travels north to Newcastle (October 21-30) where perhaps he will encounter Melvyn Bragg, fresh from his triumph at the Kent Literature Festival at Folkestone (October 21-23). Bragg is discussing his own novels at Folkestone, and other people's at Newcastle. Andrea Newman talks about her books and television plays at Folkestone, and then meets Deborah Moggach in Newcastle to debate "Totem and Taboo" (her books and television plays).

While Newcastle adopts an orthodox pattern of lectures, discussions and readings, there is an atmosphere of rolled-up sleeves at Folkestone, where the emphasis is on writing workshops. H.R.F. Keating on thrillers, Penelope Lively on short stories, D.M. Thomas on poetry and Zoë Fairbairns on feminist writing. Newcastle, however, has the ultimate closing event, which "aussi includes a glass of vin très ordinaire avec fromages anglais de supermarché". The speaker: Miles Kingston.

Take a new look with...

NEWSociety



What makes Arthur Scargill, Auberon Waugh and Enoch Powell climb the greasy pole? Read about the losers at the top in this week's NEWSOCIETY. More about the arts. Starting this week, more from Simon Hoggart on TV, John Lahr on theatre, Peter Pullen on new art.

NEWSociety out now!

Among this week's contributors

Geoffrey Berr's most recent book is *Honour among Men and Nations: Transformations of an Idea*, 1983.

Lillian Bianchi's *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949* was published in 1972.

J.A. Burrow is the author of *Medieval Writers and their Work*, 1982.

A.C. Danto's most recent book is *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1981.

Della Davin is the author of *Woman-work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China*, 1976.

Karen Dawisha is a Rockefeller International Relations Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC.

D.J. Enslin's collection of essays *A World for Sentences* was reviewed recently in the TLS.

Desmond Fox is Professor of English at the University of Toronto.

Simon Glavitt is football correspondent of *The Sunday Times*.

Michael Holroyd is the author of *Lytton Strachey*, 1971, and *Augustus John*, 1976.

James Joll's books include *Intellectuals in Politics*, 1960, and *Granville*, 1977.

Ian Kershaw's *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich, 1933-1945*, was published this year.

William Lamont's books include *Richard Baxter and the Millennium*, 1979.

Zachary Leader is the author of *Reading Blake's Songs*, 1981.

P.G. Lewis is the author of *Later Medieval France: The Poity*, 1968.

Roger Longridge's novels include *Their Pleasing Sport*, 1975, and *The Babe in the Wood*, 1976.

Michael Mason is a lecturer in English at University College London.

William S. McFeely is the author of *Grant: A Biography*, 1978.

William Mostyn-Owen is a Director of the Old Master Department at Christie's.

Peter Porter's *Collected Poems* were published earlier this year.

Nicholas Rankin's stage adaptation of stories by J.L. Borges, *Argent* was performed in 1980.

Sir James Richards's *The National Trust Book of English Architecture* was published in 1981.

Geoffrey Sampson's most recent books are *Liberty and Language*, 1979 and *Schools of Linguistics*, 1980.

R.S. Short is Senior Lecturer in the School of Modern Languages and European History at the University of East Anglia.

P.H. Sutcliffe is the author of *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History*, 1978.

W.L. Warren's *Henry II* was published in 1973.

John White is a Senior Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Hull.

The first, authorized biography

VANESSA BELL

FRANCES SPALDING

'Gives us as much about the spell that Vanessa cast as perhaps can ever be written... a source book of fascinating readings.'

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

'After reading only a few pages one wants her life to be as noble as her character. It was noble, and so is this book.'

GUARDIAN

'Sensitive and scholarly... great insight and authority.'

TIMES

'Admirable... great subtlety and penetration.'

OBSERVER

'There is much that is new... ruminative and thought-provoking.'

SPECTATOR

£12.95

Weidenfeld & Nicolson

53
er

nt
it, to
shelf

most
nd

ewey
ro and

ditime
ld

rdy

The child within: picture books 1

Kicki Moxon Browne

Helme Heine has a number of successful picture books to his credit. His hallmark is a brisk text, married to eccentric illustrations. In *The Most Wonderful Egg in the World*, three hens compete to see who can lay the best egg. The King, who sets up the competition, decides that the eggs are all wonderful in their different ways, and makes all three hens princesses by ceremoniously painting their crests with gold. One of the eggs is cubic and multicoloured, and the back cover shows the three hens admiring their chicks, one of them cubic and multicoloured. . . . Heine's approach is always refreshingly uncompromising. One has the feeling that he writes and paints for the child in himself, and so his books seem never to strike a false note. With picture books one is often conscious of the author trying hard to produce what will appeal to children, whereas the best authors (Sendak, for example) write only what appeals to themselves.

A strong "Let's write a children's book" feeling intrudes in *The King, the Cat and the Fiddle* which is co-written by Yehudi Menuhin and Christopher Hope. The story, involving a stupid king, a clever cat and a number of accountants who learn to play the violin, is wordy, pedantic and ponderously twinkling and the book would have benefited by being pared down to a third of its present length. The only interesting parts are some sketches of Menuhin doing his daily exercises, and - a bonus - the score of Flocco's *Allegro*, the "Für Elise" of the violin repertoire. However, the artwork is quite attractive, and the book is bound to sell well as a Christmas present for musical children.

Little Chicks' Mothers and All the Others describes briefly in verse and in reassuring tones some farm animals and their young giving just enough information for very young minds to understand the difference between a hen and a duck, a pig and a cow, and a sheep and a goat. The pictures are simple and clear, and the text is a good balance between geometric shapes and realism. This is a mild and gentle book behind its rather aggressive-looking cover. Also in rhyme and informative in intention is *There's a Train Going by My Window*, the train being a dream-train which takes a little girl round the world every night to play with the camels in Egypt, the pandas in China, the penguins in the Hebrides, and so on. The illustrations are quite delightful, rich, detailed, and amusing.

The text, although potentially irritating because of the refrain of "chucka-chuck, chucka-choon and chucka-chuck", has a snap to it and follows the illustrations closely with one single idea per double-page spread: "The first stop in India / Chucka-chuck, chucka-chuck / Where / I'll tickle the tigers / Till they say, 'We give up'".

Animals often appear as the grown-up heroes of a children's story, rather curiously living side by side with people. *The Dinosaur Who Wouldn't*

Get Up is about a dinosaur husband who won't get out of bed and help himself a job. His dinosaur wife tries to drive him out of bed by making several animals from the Zoo and the pet shop come and jump on him, but all in vain. It is finally the smell of pancakes that lures him up, and off he goes to his interview and gets the job. One can only hope that this will save the couple from the fearsome urban squalor in which they live - all peeling, mouse-infested houses, demolition sites, barbed wire and barred shop windows, constantly on view to the town's exclusively human inhabitants.

The hero in *Hamnet and "The Pig Affair"* is a pig, who finds an old chest with a treasure map in his attic, sets off to find the treasure, is intercepted by a pirate ship (the pirates are frogs, whereas the other, peripheral characters are real people), loses the treasure in a game of snap, regains it and flees on the back of a kindly whale to the safety of his home again. The illustrations are very pretty, nostalgic and romantic; on the inside cover is the treasure map that Hamnet found, with intriguing place names. The text is

mock-pompous and arch, with many tired phrases such as "hapless pair" and "stricken vessel"; there are also a lot of very long words. However, the sequence of events of the story is straightforward, and possibly young children (the book is recommended for four to six year olds) will not mind only understanding part of the main drift. An element of the incomprehensible often seems to be an asset to a picture-book story.

There have been many picture-book editions of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. The story itself was written by Prokofiev as a framework for his real purpose which was to be a guide to the different sounds of orchestral instruments. Without the music the story is a little thin. However, this book would be a good adjunct to listening to the music. The illustrations have a racy, snap-shot quality, as people and creatures are caught in mid-movement, and the characters match the personality suggested by the music: Peter, fresh-faced and fearless; the wolf, sinister and brooding; and above all the kvetching grandfather lumbering heavily across the pages.

The Writing on the Wall is Leon Garfield's second picture book version of an episode from the Bible, and, as in *King Nimrod's Tower*, the events are seen through the eyes of a child. Garfield uses rich poetic images and rippling rhythms with stirring eloquence. As in *King Nimrod's Tower*, the message in *The Writing on the Wall* is clearly that the meek shall inherit the earth; while Belshazzar is brought to justice for daring to eat out of God's holy golden bowl, a hungry cat, "tattered, one-eared, smelly old

HELMIE HEINE: *The Most Wonderful Egg in the World*. Dent. £4.95, 0 460 06095 3.

YEHUDI MENUHIN and CHRISTOPHER HOPE: *The King, the Cat and the Fiddle*. Illustrated by Angela Barrett. Benn. £4.95, 0 510 00155 1.

WENDY KESSELMAN: *There's a Train Going by My Window*. Illustrated by Tony Chen. Hodder and Stoughton. £4.50, 0 340 33378 2.

MILDRED LUTON: *Little Chicks' Mothers and All the Others*. Illustrated by Mary Maki Rae. Kestrel. £5.50, 0 670 43113 3.

Mordecai", is allowed to drink cream from the same bowl. The illustrations, by Michael Bragg, are epic and grandiose, accurately depicting the grand manner of the guests at the feast, the pick their teeth with the knife and yawn and slouch. Garfield's brand of heroic story-telling is a long way away from the type of modern whimsy presented by Helme Heine, but what they have in common is the ability to communicate directly with children without faltering.

NAOMI RUSSELL: *The Dinosaur Who Wouldn't Get Up*. Methuen. £3.95, 0 416 25480 2.

TONY NIGHTINGALE: *Hamnet and "The Pig Affair"*. Illustrated by Sandy Nightingale. Dent. £4.50, 0 460 06140 2.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV: *Peter and the Wolf*. Illustrated by Charles Mikolajewicz. Granada. £3.95, 0 246 12120 3.

LEON GARFIELD: *The Writing on the Wall*. Illustrated by Michael Bragg. Methuen. £4.50, 0 416 25830 1.

The daily round: picture books 2

Sarah Wintle

Eight recent picture books concentrate on familiar and homely aspects of small children's lives. The range of topics runs from such features of the daily round as having a bath or going to bed to less frequent but still unsurprising events like a first party or the arrival of a sibling. Subjects like this can be dull. They demand either the speed and precision of farce or a recognition of deeper feelings and an ability to present them with simplicity and humour. It seems that small children need domestic comedy, not *King Lear* or a social worker's report.

HOLLY KELLER: *Too Big*. Combines sympathy with comedy in both its story and its illustrations. It is a variation on the old theme of the awfulness of being joined by a new baby. Keller's characters are plump grey creatures with scaly pink mouse tails, vole-like faces and mops of stringy hair. Baby Jake has some of the unformed, hairless, and hideous aspects of most new-born creatures - a nice touch of realism - and young Henry behaves with obnoxious self-pity. The book manages to be both touching and funny.

Going to a birthday party on your own for the first time is the surprisingly didactic subject of Shirley Hughes's new *Alfie* book. The party itself is however, splendidly done, especially the host Bernard, who is one of those tough blonde three-year-olds who look like charming juvenile delinquents and behave accordingly. Bernard disconcertingly tosses Alfie's politely proffered present of crayons into the air, meanly pops everyone's soap-bubbles, blows into his jelly with his straw, and insists on wearing a tiger

mask. But after a sticky start Alfie copes manfully, even plucking up courage to discard his comfort blanket to protect another child from the caddish Bernard. As usual the evocation of family life in the faintly shabby Victorian and Edwardian inner suburbs is beautifully done.

A wider range of potentially frightening experiences are illustrated and defused in Jan Ormerod's *Be Brave, Billy*, which depicts the comically alternating fears of Billy and his little brother Billy. Starting school, Punch and Judy, climbing frames and swings, grazed knees, noisy trains, haircuts and washes, dogs, geese, mice and the dark all get a pretty colour-washed illustration. The prettiness and the playfulness of the illustrations, the other make the point clearly enough: Billy, for example, hates having his hair cut while Billy looks smug. Billy howls when her hair is washed and it is Billy's turn to laugh. The same illustration's *Rhymes Around the Day* is equally gentle. It follows a family from getting up until bath and bed, providing rhymes to suit. These are well chosen, memorable and often good to shout: Hokey, pokey, winky wum / How do you like your titties done? / Stewed in whisky and bottled in rum, / Says the King of the Cannibal Islands.

Ten, Nine, Eight and Doing the Washing, are all also concerned with daily tasks, duties, and routines. *Ten, Nine, Eight*, which is for very small children, is a count down to bed (the cover picture includes a toy model of the space shuttle). Its atmosphere however is successfully non-explosive and cosy. It starts with its small black heroine's ten toes, pink-edged on a red carpet and ends with her peacefully wide-eyed in her cot. The whole book, with its variations on red, green, and

yellow, its unfussy boldness, and its use of counting and rhyme is attractive and original.

Doing the Washing provides more basic fun, especially in its portrayal of an obviously scary household. The mother wears an emerald green skirt and purple tights and the house has bare floorboards and an Aga, but such details will interest parents more than children. The book's main theme is the muddle made by a dog and a toddler - all pleasant enough but fundamentally unstartling.

The last three books all have stories in which parental foibles and deficiencies are considered and found generally laughable, although behind *Alfie's* *Doing the Washing* lies a possibly harsher message. Alex's Mum, who may chat to her friends too much, but is on the whole pretty tolerant, is played off against Wendy's Mum who is a nagging spoilsport with a mean face and a passion for cleanliness. The slight plot concerns an outing to the country on which Alex loses his jeans and gets covered in mud and blackberry juice, while poor Wendy is repressed by her mother and teased by her peers. Words and illustrations stick firmly to knock-about surface incidents.

Tommy Dobbie's mother is much too preoccupied with frenziedly

HOLLY KELLER: *Too Big*. Julia MacRae. £3.95, 0 86203 141 9.

SHIRLEY HUGHES: *Alfie Gives a Hand*. Bodley Head. £4.50, 0 370 30521 3.

JAN ORMEROD: *Be Brave, Billy*. Dent. £4.50, 0 460 06093 7.

PAT THOMSON: *Rhymes around the Day*. Illustrated by Jan Ormerod. Kestrel. £4.50, 0 7226 5808 7.

cleaning her house, baking and ironing to take any notice of her son's architectural achievements in the sandpit, but luckily there is a witch's door. She transforms Tommy into an elephant, a tiger and a pig but the mother only worries about her "nice clean floor". Finally the witch lets the idea of a mouse, and Tommy's mother stands on her chair, shows her frilly petticoat and screams. The idea neat but the illustrations are garish and too fuzzy to show the full incongruity of the animal transformation.

One *Moonlit Night* tackles a father's foolishness for a change and does so with nicely characterized wit. The illustrations, more functional than expressive, help the story along and suggest a real sense of domestic routine. When Tony is given a tent, his father is far more excited than he is. It insists that Tony and his friend Sam sleep out one night. The boys go somewhat fearfully to bed. Wendy's Lisa pretends to be a ghost, she demands some kind of communication system with the house and Father enthusiastically arranges a string from the tent to his big toe. The boys sleep like logs, but the string is tweaked by an owl, the family cat, and the milkman. The book is funny in itself, and provides a nice recognition of the way in which parents use their children to act out their own atavistic fantasies.

MOLLY BANG: *Ten Nine Eight*. Julia MacRae. £3.95, 0 86203 139 7.

SARAH GARLAND: *Doing the Washing*. Bodley Head. £4.50, 0 370 30948 0.

MARY DICKINSON: *Alfie's Outing*. Illustrated by Charlotte Farnham. Deutsch. £3.95, 0 233 97558 6.

RONDA and DAVIS ARMSTRONG: *One Moonlit Night*. Deutsch. £4.95, 0 233 97540 3.

A suburban king

Richard Cobb

DAVID MCCOE

The Adventures of King Rollo: King Rollo and the New Shoes, King Rollo and the Birthday, King Rollo and the Bread, King Rollo and the Tree

0 09 928250 5

Further Adventures of King Rollo: King Rollo and the Dishes, King Rollo and the Balloons, King Rollo and King Frank, King Rollo and the Search

0 09 931 200 X

King Rollo's Playroom and other stories: King Rollo and the Masks, King Rollo and the Playroom, King Rollo and the Breakfast, King Rollo and the Dog

Andersen Press. £3.95, 0 86024 036 9

It is right that kings should have a lot of shoes. It must be a sign of kingship: one would not expect a king to be barefoot, that is only for a peasant (like a Farmer). And, of course, if they were lace-up, he would not have to do them up himself, that would mean bending, and kings are not

to bend. But the Magician is quite right to refuse to use magic to do them up, that would be a misuse of magic. King Rollo has to learn, and learn the hard way. But he must not be seen learning, he has to go and do it in his room, with the door shut. How proud he is to show Queen Gwen his new lace-ups, the laces in two colours, so proud that he walks leaning backwards and raising his feet high so that he can admire the laces, done up by himself. At least the Magician is able to save Cook's lovely cake from falling on the floor. King Rollo and his friend Queen Gwen march side by side, raising their feet high.

But, in this birthday story, he is not wearing lace-ups just as well, for they get him in such a state, he has temper tantrums and breaks things. But Cook has a bit interfering. It is such a pretty cake. Why should he have to paint one himself? Cook is always barging in with his best suggestions; of course, it is the best, he has to learn. Hamlet, as usual, is as usual, very helpful. It is a good idea to draw Queen Gwen on a lace, another sign of monarchy, like

having lots of shoes. Queen Gwen has on very special shoes for her birthday all billowy white flounces. And her other cards are all the same. Her house has a Gothic porch. King Rollo's house is detached, suburban, built in the 1930s, but with a modern kitchen.

Of course a king would want to show off his majesty, he is part of the royal household, like the knight seen lurking somewhere, though he is not introduced. The roast chicken looks delicious, so does the chocolate cake, the ice-cream is huge and in two colours. But the Farmer is quite right to hold out for his original loaf of bread.

King Rollo likes roses; all kings do. But it is not right for kings - even little ones like King Rollo - to climb trees, unless, of course, the king is on the run and has to hide, then the tree has to be leafy oak. Well, he has had plenty of warning, it is silly to want to climb to the very top, just showing off. He will know better next time. Cook warned him all along.

Cook is a bit self-satisfied. Even though there are two of them, they do a good job washing up, though it is a misuse of magic. King Rollo and even the Magician seem a bit afraid of Cook. The Magician looks like a professor; and he forgets things like a professor. But, of course, he can use magic to remember things. Balloons are fun, especially when you blow them up and let the air out, better when they go bang; but King Rollo uses a pin, and this is naughty, it isn't really magic, it is cheating. But Cook, Hamlet and the Magician are frightened, and King Rollo laughs.

King Rollo has too many toys, he is rather spoilt: bat and ball, soldiers, arrow and bow, boxing gloves, train set, paint box and brushes. But he does not like tidying up his playroom and putting his toys away. He realizes, when he steps on some of them and breaks them, the next morning, that he should have listened to Cook.

King Rollo can be thoughtful. It is very kind to bring Cook's breakfast to her room, when she is ill. And he gets it all ready without breaking anything.

King Frank is back on a second visit, this time bringing with him a spotted dog. Of course it makes dirty paw marks all over the fitted carpets, so Cook is cross; then the spotted brute upsets the Magician's round table. So they take it out and meet other beastly dogs on their walk. They all get very

tired; and King Rollo eats a huge tea; but he doesn't really like dogs, so everything is alright, and Hamlet, who joins in all his games, is relieved.

Queen Gwen is as naughty as King Rollo. It is very naughty to come up on Cook wearing those frightening masks. But the Magician has a much more frightening one, and King Rollo and Queen Gwen want to run away. They are only a little king and queen really. I don't think King Rollo can be King of Scotland; if he were, he would not have so many toys, balloons and shoes and several pairs of striped pyjamas. Kings of Scotland never have many things. But Cook must be Scottish, she is so good at cakes and scones. King Rollo is right to get cross with objects, he knows that they mean trouble. Queen Gwen lives quite near, but in a big house, within walking distance, in the same middle-class suburb.

King Frank is, I think, on the whole, a Bad Influence. Not only is he taller than King Rollo, who is so sensitive about his height, he introduces him to dogs and this upsets Hamlet who is one of the pillars of the Royal Household. Also King Frank looks rather foreign and shifty. King Frank does not let out where he lives; he just turns up, on foot, so it cannot be very far. Perhaps he lives at the wrong end of town, or down a street of semi-detached houses with no trees in front of them; his clothes look rather raffish, with a hint of padded shoulders. They all wear medieval laces and medieval shoes, even medieval lace-ups; queen Gwen with several skirts, one on top of the other.

I feel I have got to know King Rollo and his friends. King Rollo is quite naughty and a bit wilful, but, with Cook around, he will learn; she always turns up just when things look like getting out of hand, and King Rollo and his friends are getting over-excited; and even the Magician cannot be relied upon to be his age, he forgets that he is wearing professional robes and glasses that make him look wise. They are just for show. Hamlet is an alert cat, ready for every sort of fun, very observant and entirely participatory. Nothing would ever get done in the house, were it not for Cook. She looks after the meals - King Rollo likes his turn, so does Queen Gwen (though she keeps her figure) - and keeps the house tidy. As long as she is around, things will get done. King Rollo is quite naughty and he knows it, he has a very knowing grin: I hope he gets into a lot more scrapes.

And yet, after all the winning features of his universe are mentioned, it is to the bear from Darkest Peru that he remains close to us because he is so amiable and well-meaning a soul. Even while tripping over baroque puns and banana skins, Paddington is a resolute fellow, with strong principles and few prejudices, full of resourcefulness and free of rancour: at once the bear heart door and something of a role model. Throughout *Paddington's Storybook*, a greatest-hits album containing ten routinely splendid stories culled from eight of the eleven earlier full-colour illustrations, Paddington is, of course, in trouble. He tugs at an innocent bystander's beard, executes an unorthodox *pas de deux* with a Russian prima donna and, at an expensive restaurant, pours water over an *omelette flambe*. But on every occasion before they can chastise him, authorities are disarmed by the dignitaries' quite charmingly modest, duffel-coated figure whose only, and original, sin is innocence. Whether administering hard stares, gallantly raising his hat or fishing for marmalade sandwiches from his battered suitcase, Paddington's friendly optimism guarantees his resilience and moves one to hope that by the time of his golden anniversary it may seem that the station was named in honour of the bear.

The Best in Fiction from Kestrel

Philippa Pearce

THE WAY TO SATIN SHORE

Philippa Pearce's first major novel for 20 years - 'A peerless mystery story... looks set to become the best novel for children published in this decade' Elaine Moss, *Good Book Guide*
0 7226 5882 6 £5.95



Robert Westhall

FUTURETRACK 5

The author of *The Machine-Gunners* and *The Scarecrows* has brilliantly created an all-too-plausible future world where young people can be too clever for their own good.
0 7226 5880 X £5.95

Jan Mark

HANDLES

Jan Mark is at her witty and most perceptive in this tale of city-girl Erica finding her own answers to the tedium of living in the country.
0 7226 5857 5 £5.50 Publication October

Jill Paton Walsh

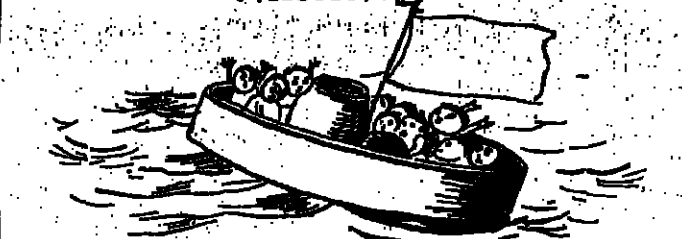
A PARCEL OF PATTERNS

A stunningly powerful drama and moving love story based on real events that took place in the Derbyshire village of Eyam during the year of the plague.
0 7226 5898 2 £5.50 Publication October

David Wiseman

THIMBLES

Following his acclaimed first novel *The Fate of Jeremy Visick*, David Wiseman again evokes the past in this story of trade unionist's daughter Cathy drawn back into the events of the Peterloo massacre.
0 7226 5864 8 £5.50



Two Exciting Anthologies

THE NEW GOLDEN LAND ANTHOLOGY

Edited by Judith Elkin

Illustrated by Vanessa Julian-Orde and others
A sparkling new edition of James Reeves' anthology of stories, poems and rhymes, first published 25 years ago and long renowned as a rich treasury for story-time.
0 7226 5805 2 £7.50

POEMS FOR 7-YEAR OLDS AND UNDER

Edited by Helen Nicoll

Illustrated by Michael Foreman
This inviting collection of poems places familiar favourites side by side with fresh and contemporary verse and introduces the youngest reader to all the fun and wonder of poetry.
0 7226 5789 7 £5.50

John Rowe Townsend

A Classic Work of Criticism

WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN

A new updated edition of John Rowe Townsend's stimulating survey of children's literature, an invaluable guide for teachers, parents and students alike.
0 7226 5466 9 £6.95 (Pelican paperback £2.50)

Take your pick from the first of the autumn picture books from ANDERSEN PRESS!

GOING WEST

by Martin Waddell and Philippe Dupasquier
Follow the excitement of a pioneer family's journey across America as part of a wagon train. One of the most original picture books published this season.
The Bookeller £4.95

DOCTOR DE SOTO

by William Steig
Winner of the American Book Award 1983, this is the delightful story of a prudent mouse dentist who outwits an untrustworthy patient.
£4.95

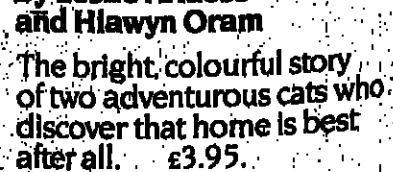
IJU AND THE PIRATE

by Louis Baum and Philippe Matter
A parrot travels half way round the world in her search for a pirate in this simple story for the youngest children.
£4.50

WHAT STANLEY KNEW

By Leslie Arkless and Hilary Oram
The bright, colourful story of two adventurous cats who discover that home is best after all.
£3.95

Andersen Press Ltd.
19-21 Conway Street,
London W1.
Tel. 01-380 0438.



Plus five new additions to the Andersen Young Readers' Library

The comic muse

Jan Pienkowski

ALAN CLARK and DAVID ASHFORD

The Comic Art of Roy Wilson
Midas Books, 12 Dewe Way,
Spelthorpe, Kent TN3 0NX. £9.95.
0 85936 283 3

COLIN MCNAUGHTON

Crazy Bear
Heinemann, £4.95.
0 434 94992 2

"What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?" - what would Alice make of a whole generation of books consisting of nothing else? The comic book has been steadily gaining ground since Carroll's time and has now conquered not only children but undergraduates, if sales in Oxford and Cambridge are any guide. In Paris, the Latin Quarter has long had lavish displays of beautifully produced hardback comic books which attract hundreds of academic browsers, presumably weaned on Tintin and Astérix and now ready for more sophisticated fare. The comic is now respectable.

The acceptance of the comic as a legitimate literary form in this country has been slow. The very success of comics as an "underground" form popular with children may, paradoxically, have stood in the way of adult acceptance. In my childhood comics were discouraged, if not forbidden, at home and in school. *Film Fun*, *The Beano* and *Dandy* were bought with precious pennies and read in secret, swapped with friends, and taken by greedy seniors. Even when that worthy product *Eagle* appeared in the 1950s, it was banned in many schools. In my school Thursdays were a high-spot of the sixth-form week: all the prefects meet each other to get at the first copy of *Eagle*. We would then huddle over it and read the whole lot.

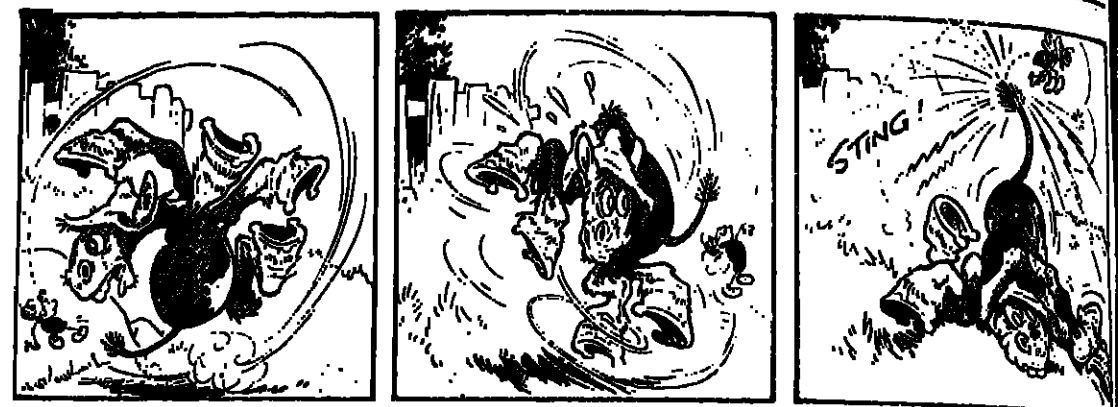
The *Comic Art of Roy Wilson* spans forty years of development of the strip cartoon from *Comic Cuts* 1926, through *Tip Top*, and *Wonder to Radio Fun*, *Film Fun* and *Buster*, 1964. Wilson was never credited - this was the fate of most British comic artists until the highly successful 2000 AD came along and changed all that, bringing our comics in line with those in the United States - but he put everything into his work just the same. His invention continued to create new characters reflecting the changing times. Gradually the long slabs of narrative under each frame began to disappear, their place taken by well-designed speech bubbles in Wilson's stylish lettering. The layouts are free from the rigours of a grid and graphic sound effects (clunk!, splat!, yeow!) play an important part in the overall design. Wilson's drawing is consistently accomplished, boisterous with high spirits, never at a loss for ideas. One of his specialities is to convey violent movement in an almost

many picture books. But, because the comic has for so long been regarded as somehow trashy and unacceptable, its new authors have to re-discover its techniques. The barrier between the commercial comic and the conventional children's book has meant that artists have to start afresh instead of building on what is perhaps the richest comic tradition in the world.

It is to this great tradition that *The Comic Art of Roy Wilson* bears witness. Born in 1900 Wilson became apprenticed to a strip cartoon artist called Newhouse after the First World War. Newhouse influenced Wilson's style but Wilson soon developed his own powerful technique. He came out of his time and started to work under his own name in the late 1920s. He drew indefatigably, producing work which is not only of a very high standard but has a joyful exuberance as yet unequalled this side of the Atlantic (the American tradition deserves an article to itself). He continued to draw strip cartoons until 1964, the year before he died.

Alan Clark and David Ashford have clearly had great difficulty in deciding what to leave out from such a treasury of work, and have reproduced over eighty pages of complete strips. The majority of them have unfortunately had to be reduced and one cannot help wishing that the pictures were bigger and more inviting for, although the comic buff would be prepared to study the lot with a magnifying glass if need be, young readers may be put off. The colour work is so lovely that one longs to see more than the tantalizing glimpse offered by the colour plates and cover. The material is wonderful - the working drawings show a skill which only the Disney studios could equal. The finished frames burst at the seams with joie de vivre. The cover of the 1938 *Funny Wonder Annual* with Pitch and Toss (two maniacally grinning sailors) in a hall of distorting mirrors recalls the innovation of the Expressionists. The choreography of the rumbustious pas de deux between George, the Jolly Gee Gee and the Bear is both charming and spectacular.

The *Comic Art of Roy Wilson* spans forty years of development of the strip cartoon from *Comic Cuts* 1926, through *Tip Top*, and *Wonder to Radio Fun*, *Film Fun* and *Buster*, 1964. Wilson was never credited - this was the fate of most British comic artists until the highly successful 2000 AD came along and changed all that, bringing our comics in line with those in the United States - but he put everything into his work just the same. His invention continued to create new characters reflecting the changing times. Gradually the long slabs of narrative under each frame began to disappear, their place taken by well-designed speech bubbles in Wilson's stylish lettering. The layouts are free from the rigours of a grid and graphic sound effects (clunk!, splat!, yeow!) play an important part in the overall design. Wilson's drawing is consistently accomplished, boisterous with high spirits, never at a loss for ideas. One of his specialities is to convey violent movement in an almost



George the Jolly Gee Gee, from the book reviewed here.

filmic manner - like a wild multiple exposure. His mastery of the human figure, foreshortening and exaggerated action never leaves him and in his final years, when Harry Secombe or Morecambe and Wise became his subjects, he manages to achieve remarkable likenesses as he places familiar figures in fantastic situations.

The same kind of appealing fantasy is the speciality of Colin McNaughton in *Crazy Bear*, a collection of four stories presented in a modified strip cartoon form. McNaughton is also, I suspect, a comic enthusiast and can perhaps be seen as a disciple of Wilson. Much of his work contains tongue-in-cheek references to a post-war childhood culture, redolent of Saturday matinees at the Odeon, the Bask Street Kids and Biffo the Bear. The big shiny red cover with its punchy lettering and hypnotic picture of the boisterous bear hero is irresistible. The

four stories are the sort of fantasies that any child might succumb to in a boring algebra period - becoming in turn cowboy, Arctic explorer, pirate and Rock 'n' Roll star. The bear lives in a world populated by other animal characters (a useful device this, particularly in our multi-racial society) and a series of dramatic events are depicted in an equally adventurous design. The layouts are very varied: no two spreads are the same. The colour is similarly ambitious.

McNaughton's book is not a true comic but it keeps falling off the picture-book fence. The mixture of type-set narrative and hand-lettered dialogue is reminiscent of the early Wilson strips, but not as polished. It is almost as if the form is being reinvented from childhood memory. The spirited drawings which are in pen and watercolour are well served by first

class production and it would be difficult to imagine a child who would not be captivated by this comic or its parent who would not accept it as an excellent picture book. By this strategy the great British comic tradition has been passed on to another generation of anxious adults. Thanks to authors like Colin McNaughton the comic is not only alive and well, but likely to be on the strength to strength. The modern comic is a complex of many things: a mixture of course, Pound's own - and circumstances was responsible; for the first, in large part, Ford Madox Hueffer) Ford. Although it would seem that over the thirty years of their friendship Pound's debt to Ford was principally an intellectual or "aesthetic" one, this was the kind that mattered most to Pound, and he never forgot it; his tributes of gratitude and loyalty continued up to and beyond Ford's death in 1939. Given the vitality of Pound's sympathies and beliefs, this was fairly remarkable.

Index of books reviewed

Alan Ahlberg: <i>Please Mrs Butler</i>	1052	Holly Keller: <i>Too Big</i>	1052
Vivien Alcock: <i>Travellers By Night</i>	1048	Wendy Kesselman: <i>There's a Train Going by my Window</i>	1052
Althea: <i>I use a wheelchair; I have diabetes; I have asthma</i>	1052	David Lambert: <i>Collins Guide to Dinosaurs</i>	1052
Ronda and David Armitage: <i>One Moonlit Night</i>	1050	Joan Lingard: <i>The Winter Visitor</i>	1052
Sandy Asher: <i>Things Are Seldom What They Seem</i>	1048	Mildred Luton: <i>Little Chick's Mothers</i>	1052
Paul Baender (Editor): <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	1045-6	Elsie McCutcheon: <i>Summer of the Zeppelin</i>	1052
Molly Bang: <i>Ten, Nine, Eight</i>	1050	David McKee: <i>The Adventure of King Rollo</i>	1052
Bartholomew Family: <i>Atlas of the World</i>	1053	Adventures of King Rollo: <i>King Rollo and the Playhouse</i>	1052
Glenn Baxter: <i>Ponies to the rescue</i>	1055	Colin McNaughton: <i>Crazy Bear</i>	1052
Sue Becklake: <i>The Mysterious Universe</i>	1054	Margaret Marshall: <i>Mike</i>	1052
Judith Berrisford: <i>Pipa's Mystery Horse</i>	1055	Greg Matthews: <i>The Further Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	1052
Judy Blume: <i>Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself</i>	1048	Yehudi Menuhin: <i>The Cat, the King and the Fiddle</i>	1052
Michael Bond: <i>Paddington's Storybook</i>	1051	Michael Morpurgo: <i>War Horse</i>	1052
Patricia Calvert: <i>The Snowbird</i>	1055	Tom Nightingale: <i>Hammie and 'The Pig Affair'</i>	1052
Guy Cardwell (Editor): <i>Mark Twain: Mississippi Writing</i>	1045-6	Rupert Oliver: <i>Dinosaurs</i>	1052
Aidan Chambers: <i>The Present Takers</i>	1048	Jan Ormerod: <i>Be Brave, Billy</i>	1052
Alan Clark and David Ashford: <i>The Comic Art of Roy Wilson</i>	1056	Philippa Pearce: <i>The Way to Saffron Shore</i>	1052
Colin Cross: <i>Born of the Sun</i>	1053	Mary Pope Osborne: <i>Rain Run, As Fast As You Can</i>	1052
Gillian Cross: <i>Born of the Sun</i>	1053	Susan Price: <i>In A Nutshell</i>	1052
Mary Dickinson: <i>Alba's Culling</i>	1050	Sergei Prokofiev: <i>Peter and the Wolf</i>	1052
Peter Dickinson: <i>Healer</i>	1049	Diane Pulein-Thompson: <i>A Pony Poem</i>	1052
Douglas Dixon: <i>After May</i>	1053	Joseph Pulein-Thompson: <i>Pony Club Cup</i>	1052
Judith Elkin (Editor): <i>The New Golden Land Anthology</i>	1053	John Rowe Townsend: <i>Dan Alone</i>	1052
Justine Fumfender: <i>Bobbie's Sponsored Ride</i>	1052	Jan Russell (Editor): <i>Methuen Book of Sinter Stories</i>	1052
Leon Garfield: <i>The Writing on the Wall</i>	1055	Naomi Russell: <i>The Dinosaur Who Wouldn't Get Up</i>	1052
Sarah Garland: <i>Doing the Washing</i>	1050	Catherine Sifton: <i>Island of the Strangers</i>	1052
John Gordon: <i>The Edge of the World</i>	1047	Catherine Sifton: <i>Adam and Eve: Jonah and the Whale</i>	1052
Rosa Guy: <i>New Guys Around the Block</i>	1046	<i>The Prodigal Son; Minkie by the Sea</i>	1052
Martyn Hamer: <i>The Night Sky</i>	1054	Rosemary Sutcliffe: <i>Bonnie Dundee</i>	1052
Helme Helme: <i>The Most Wonderful Egg in the World</i>	1050	Lawrence Sanders: <i>Makers of Modern Britain</i>	1052
Anthony Horowitz: <i>The Devil's Door-bell</i>	1049	Pat Thomson: <i>Rhymes Around the Day</i>	1052
Shirley Hughes: <i>Alba Gives a Hand</i>	1050	Ruthven Tremain: <i>The Animals' Who's Who</i>	1052
Jennifer Kavanagh (Editor): <i>The Methuen Book of Animal Tales</i>	1052	A. Stephen Tring: <i>Penny Dreadful</i>	1052
		Mary Weston: <i>Haphazard House</i>	1052
		Robert Westall: <i>Futuretrack 5</i>	1052

Discover the enchantment of books

YOUNGER FICTION

Just Like Abigail

MOIRA MILLER
Abigail is always up to something! And things always happen to her whether she's sailing a boat in the park, looking at dinosaurs in a museum or waiting a tactic on the football field!
416 284000 £3.95 (Read Aloud)

Danger in the Magic Kingdom

JULIA DOBSON
Sam and Abi, the Crip Twins, find themselves caught up in a dangerous escape attempt by two Russian ballerinas desperate to defect to the West. Another exciting adventure lies ahead of them.
416 291309 £3.95 (Pied Piper Books)

Caught Out

MICHAEL HARDCASTLE
Joel Self is determined to capture the Shipton Cricket Club's junior eleven to victory but why is Carlisle Kirby, his leading batsman, so reluctant to play? An action-packed adventure combining convincing characters, gripping story-line and told with detailed knowledge of the sport.
416 295055 £3.95 (Pied Piper Books)

PICTURE BOOKS

Over the Moon

SHAWN and PAUL RICE
A charming and individual view of the life of Pumpkin the cat featuring Shawn Rice's beautiful and luminous illustrations.
416 257704 £4.50

A Touch of Gold

Stories from the Greek Myths
MIRIAM HODGSON (author)
CAROL BARKER (artist)
The legends of Perseus, Icarus, Midas and Theseus told in a simple form, and all superbly illustrated.
416 224008 £4.95

The Doghill Kids Go to Town

MAURI KUNNAS
An enchanting, detailed, humorous picture book about the Doghill Kids from the country who long to visit their cousins in town.
416 451608 £4.95

Methuen Children's Books

LITERARY CRITICISM

RYLA LINDBERG-SEVERSTED

Friendship
22pp. Faber. £20.
0 571 11968 9

Edmund came to London in 1908 "with £3 knowing no one". By the end of 1909, judging from some of the letters published here, he knew practically everybody; and by the time he left for Paris in 1920 "with a letter from Thomas Hardy" he had decided, characteristically, that they hadn't really been worth knowing anyway. The last development an instructive combination of personalities - chief among them of course, Pound's own - and circumstances was responsible; for the first, in large part, Ford Madox Hueffer) Ford. Although it would seem that over the thirty years of their friendship Pound's debt to Ford was principally an intellectual or "aesthetic" one, this was the kind that mattered most to Pound, and he never forgot it; his tributes of gratitude and loyalty continued up to and beyond Ford's death in 1939. Given the vitality of Pound's sympathies and beliefs, this was fairly remarkable.

Ryla Lindberg-Seversted goes some way towards explaining it when she writes in the introduction to *Pound: The Story of a Literary Friendship* that the two men shared "a love for and knowledge of Mediterranean culture; their devotion to literature; and their faith and tireless promotion of modern and writing." A handy summary, but it imposes a suggestion of unity and orderliness on lives that in fact present a bewildering spectacle of such energies deployed to almost comically diverse ends. The merest glance beyond Lindberg-Seversted's obvious shows fragments of Pound and Ford flying off in a hundred different directions at any one time, and attempts to make it cohere, to marshal the forces at work into a single unified front have often seemed ill-advised. But there was such a thrust, for both of them it was writing, and writing was seldom not "the point".

"For the sake of giants" Pound called him in the *Cantos*, but Ford was not exactly a pygmy himself. The first (December, 1908) issue of *The English Review*, of which Ford was founder-editor, included James' "The Jolly Comer" and work by Conrad, Wells, Galsworthy and W. H. Hudson as well as the poem for which - as Ford used to say - in some moods - the whole thing had been started, Hardy's "A Morning Tragedy"; later issues included stories by D. H. Lawrence and by Wyndham Lewis and Pound. The latter had come back from Venice with copies of *A Long Spell*, made his army of the London network led him from Elkin Mathews to Ernest Rhys, editor of the *English Review*, via May Sinclair to Olivia and Dorothy Shakespeare, T. E.

Determinedly provincial, bohemian in dress and manner, Pound captivated and amused the established Ford by the spirit with which he pursued his "haphazard" enthusiasms. "Sestina" was "a piece d'honneur" in the June 1909 *English Review*, as Pound proudly informed his father. Pound was a regular visitor to the "Lodge", the home of Ford's companion, Violet. Hunt. Her "modest" association with Ford was the London sheep (Henry James among them) flocking out of her salon, and unquestionably damaged Ford's reputation; Pound, the new man on the block, went for the tennis as much as the talk - was more loyal. His "bohemian" impulses were stillborn in those days: he was subduing "temperaments" than his own: "lunched with the distinguished novelist who is now to Lady Lewis for tea, which was the endurable. I now go to walk with Mr. Hunt, tea with the

Poundings and Hoofings

Alan Jenkins

Shakespeare, and depart at 8:45pm for Paris.

That Pound was falling in love with Dorothy Shakespeare accounts for some of this; yet it was also the kind of love life that suited him, at least for a while, and at any rate as long as he could play Ariel to Ford's Prospero. A relationship of mutual affection and respect developed which partook sufficiently of the ridiculous to merit a spoof in *Punch*, which introduced to its startled readers the poet Boaz Bobb and his aristocratic friend William le Queux. Ford's "disciple and play-fellow", as R. A. Scott-James put it, was evidently happy to be just that until his own convictions - which had always had force - also began to take shape, and even if only by a succession of provisional strategies, improvised rules of thumb, the direction his writing must take emerged clear of the 1890s mist. By the time that process was complete, the disciple had virtually become the master - a transformation that occurred also in Pound's dealings with Yeats, though Pound's best (in that oddly deferential way of his) that he "made his life" in London by visits of homage to the novelist and the poet alternately.

The process itself had begun with Ford performing what has been called "the most significant act of criticism of the first half of the century" in response to Pound's latest book, *Cantos*. That work's "hyper-aesthetics" or "over-squeamishness", as Pound himself later put it, or according to Ford "the language", caused Ford to roll on the floor in agonized laughter. Pound took the point, abandoned his Wardour Street diction, pre-Raphaelite verities and whimsically "historical" scenarios and started to write like - well, like Robert Browning. He also started to declare that he wanted poetry to be "austere, direct, free from emotional slither". Nothing, perhaps, could be farther from the nature of his own early masterpieces - "Near Perigord", say - but the seeker after the Poundian essence soon learns that the presiding spirit is paradox, contradiction.

Contradiction in more than one sense, in fact: Donald Davie has given a lively account of Pound's years in Edwardian London, seeing him as a young hopeful who came looking for an *auteur*, seeking to apprentice himself to a master in the shape of Lawrence Binyon or Maurice Hewlett, and moving effortlessly on the fringes of a "privileged elite" in which the literary intellectual had direct access to the centres of power, by way of the conjugal bed as well as over the dinner table. But, faced with the unrelenting, frivolity of literary London, he threw up his hands in a place in this charmed circle by joining forces, instead, with Wyndham Lewis and *Blast*. Davie remarks:

If we ask what it was about this society which made Pound and also Lewis affront it more or less deliberately, to ensure that its doors were closed to them, I think only one answer is possible: it was ineradicably vowed to the idea of the artist as amateur... It is plain that in Mrs. Lowndes's society, writing, for instance, was conceived of as typically a spare-time activity.

This wasn't, of course, the way Pound conceived of it at all. *Pound/Ford* reprints his classic essay "The Prosopopoeia in Verse", originally a review of Ford's *Collected Poems*:

In a country in love with amateurs, in a country where the incompetent have such beautiful manners, and personalities so fragile and charming that one cannot bear to injure their feelings by the introduction of competent criticism, it is well that one man should have a vision of perfection...

Wilfred Scawen Blunt, followed by Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint, H. D.; now suddenly the only worthwhile things were being done by Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska, Eliot. There were losses as well as gains, and the realignment left Ford out in the cold: he took to calling Pound's triumvirate *les jeunes* and comparing himself to Coventry Patmore.

Ford, though in some ways "deracinated" and a maverick himself, and though the Hueffer did not become Ford until 1919, had acquired early the habit of looking and sounding the part; of trying to convince the world (in a way that later infuriated T. S. Eliot) that he was "an officer and an English gentleman". Yet he had managed to do this without sacrificing any of his "professionalism" - learned, rather undiscriminatingly, from French models - in the writing of fiction, or his commitment to critical "standards". About Ford's own novels Pound was never very sure; as if by way of compensation, he was over-enthusiastic by the musical qualities of his poems, and his generous towards the modernity of diction and approach he found in others. But for someone of Pound's clique-forming, propagandizing bent the issues were primarily polemical, a matter of instructing the world in how the new poetry was going to be written. It is here that Ford's "vision of perfection" inspired by Flaubert and Maupassant was most important to Pound; and it is here too, in their rapid exchange of hunches and convictions, that the early letters fascinate.

The influence of Ford is in fact satisfyingly clear in outline, but infuriatingly cloudy in its detail. Almost from the start we find Pound disapproving of Impressionism's emphasis on the visual, whereas "Poetry is in some odd way concerned with the specific variety of things, with their nature"; with one hand Pound gives Ford credit for "gracious impressions, leisurely, low-toned", and with the other he takes it away: "Most impressionism is too sloppy. But this particular poem, despite its general looseness, has patches of great charm..." More consistently we find Ford praised for his insistence on *le mot juste*, on "clarity and precision" - not in Pound's view, to be found in his novels - and on "current", "contemporary" or even "colloquial" speech. Both writers acknowledged speech, but the important work had been done by Hardy and Browning, who by Hardy and Browning, according to Ford were the precursors of Imagism; Pound gracefully elected Ford as intermediary, since he had "come out of the poets but had shed 'the encrustation'".

Ford had no such hesitations about Pound. *Cantos* was probably "the most beautiful book ever written", he wrote in one of many tributes included here; in the first *Cantos*, which are giving Pound trouble (no overall structure yet discerned) receive unstinting praise; by 1932 Ford was writing: "for a quarter of a century and in obscure periodicals, Mr. Pound has stood as Censor of Crab Street, club-holder to Parnassus and Persius for all chained Muses." Even allowing for a tinge of friendly irony, the fulsome note is not untypical. One wonders where the professionalism had gone, and what Pound thought of this kind of thing once the gratifying glow had died away.

It was, though, always Ford's critical sense, rather than critical writings, that Pound trusted; the latter, by 1923 (when *Imagisme* had long given way to Vorticism and more, and the bywords were now *vigour* and *intensity*), were being impatiently dismissed: "he bases his criticism on the eye, and almost solely on the eye. Nearly everything he says applies to things seen. It is the exact rendering of the visible image; the cabbage field seen, France seen from the cliffs."

So it goes on. Such "minor differences of opinion", as Lindberg-Seversted calls these alienations, have no dampening effect on their mutual boasting activities. And indeed most of the letters are concerned with Poundings and Hoofings, or work other's behalf and in the name of Art - the actual names

whose causes are taken up are legion. Those of Lewis, Joyce, Eliot, Gaudier-Brzeska, Cocteau only the best known among them. There are rancorous disagreements with publishers and editors of little-ish magazines, and continual worries about money. The worries, for Pound anyway, were not unconnected with the disagreements, and were the cost of his "integrity" (Ford was rather more conciliatory; in a sense more "professional", in fact). But on more than one occasion when Ford was forced into tentative requests for financial help from his impecunious ally, the cheque is despatched by return of post. Other requests - and equally, offers of help in other forms - had to wait longer, as a rule.

This was partly due to the fact that, as the letter-heads constantly remind us, both men spent a lot of their time moving about. From London Pound moved to Paris in 1920, then on to Rapallo in 1924-25. Ford decamped to France from his fastnesses in Sussex, Red Ford and Coopers Cottage, some time in 1922, and from 1923 was permanently on the move between Paris, Toulon and the United States. Helped (and hindered) by Pound, he had also staged something of a comeback with *The Transatlantic Review* in 1924, which numbered Valéry, Joyce, Stein and Hemingway among its contributors; Ford-as-Editor was very much back in the swim of Parisian literary and social life. By the late 1920s he had pretty well decided that his future lay in America, where he was more highly respected than in England, and where he saw the only opportunity of earning a stable living - himself and his mistress(es) - mainly by lecturing. In a spirit of great generosity he encouraged Pound to do the same, and went to some lengths to secure a teaching post for him, rather randomly at first, then, all through 1936 and '37, at a progressive-sounding institution called Olivet College in Michigan. The principal of Olivet, Joseph Brewer - who once humorously sub-edited or rather literary-edited the *SPRINGATOR* for three weeks and then was summarily rebuffed because his influence on him was too great - wrote Ford - had created a Chair of Comparative Literature for Ford and was eager that Pound should occupy it after him.

The job would actually have meant little more than being a kind of genius-in-residence, with very few teaching duties, much time for writing, and a regular income; Pound's response was at first evasive, then downright testy, and one of the most touching and sympathetic letters in the book comes from a Ford at the end of his (very long) tether:

Dear Ezra, Do exercise a little imagination and try to understand the situation. I am an extremely sick man and your incomprehensible scrawls are a torture to me... The situation is this: I am offering to give up my job at Olivet because you have been making noises about Universities for a long time and it would give you a chance really to do something. I have already answered your question about a press. They have a press at Olivet. They print a paper. They would no doubt do any necessary scholastic printing you needed. But they probably would not print Mussolini-Douglas propaganda for you... Please understand: I am not a confidence trickster trying to induce you into some disastrous folly. I am not trying to persuade you to take the job. You would probably turn that pleasant place into a sort of hell. But it is my duty to say that there the place is for you and the college authorities want you because they admire you as a poet and teacher.

None of it was good enough for Pound. Instead, something in him raged senseless against this spontaneity and courageous act of goodwill on the part of Ford and Brewer alike. For as Ford well knew, Pound's manias were no longer restricted to literary ones; the examples that Mussolini and Major Douglas than Maupassant or Dante; the precepts came less and less from L. Po or Laforgue, and all good was reposed in Social Credit and Fascism. If, apart

New Oxford Books: History

The Great Chain of History

William Buckland and the English School of Geology 1814-1849

Nicolaas A. Rupke

This book describes the early nineteenth-century English contributions to the revolutionary discovery that the earth had existed long before man, and that it had passed through a progressive sequence of changes. Dr Rupke provides the story of the discovery of geological history and shows how it was incorporated into English natural theology, offering at the same time the first scientific biography of William Buckland, a central figure in the English school, to which we owe some of the most outstanding contributions to the study of earth history. £22.50

Thomas Harriot

A Biography
John W. Shirley

Thomas Harriot (1560-1621) is an important figure in the history of science; an innovative genius comparable in stature with his contemporaries Kepler, Descartes, and Galileo. During this century his manuscripts have emerged from neglect, and are here used for the first time to present a true picture of the nature of his achievement and his position. £25

The Fall of the Florentine Republic 1512-1530

J. N. Stephens

This book explains how the final phase of the Florentine republic was the outcome of the city's political development since the thirteenth century and in what ways the Medici established their permanent position. It is the first book in forty years devoted to the political evolution of Florence after 1494. £19.50 Oxford-Warburg Studies

Town, City and Nation

England 1850-1914

P. J. Waller

By the outbreak of the First World War England had become the world's first mass urban society; in just over sixty years the proportion of urban dwellers had risen from 50 to 80 per cent. This book provides a comprehensive analysis of those contributions, suburbs, satellite towns, garden cities, and seaside resorts which so fascinated the rest of the world. It is in many respects a general social history of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century England, seen from an urban perspective. £12.50 paperback £3.95 OPUS

Soviet Foreign Policy

The Brezhnev Years
Robin Edmonds

Robin Edmonds here presents a dispassionate view of the foreign policy pursued by the Soviet Union during Leonid Brezhnev's eighteen years as General Secretary of the Communist Party. £4.95 Oxford Paperbacks

Oxford University Press

from these, the whole world — and especially the United States — was evil, how could Pound accept a small slice of it when it was offered? And what could be achieved by bowing himself to the "YOKE" that he saw being "devised" by Oliver and Ford? If egomania and paranoia were at work here, there was also a good deal of the disappointed saviour, the proselytizer whose message had not got through. America had already wounded Pound once, as England was to do later; such things were not easily forgiven. All the same, and however familiar the story may be, we are pulled up short by the fact that Pound thought worthy of imparting to Ford in 1938: "At any rate a Rothschild has been arrested but I am afraid they won't kill him."

One of the things that had come between the Edwardian Indian summer and this fall-off was the First World War. It receives a few mentions in despatches here and there, details of the two men's *engagements*, or what their various domiciles meant to them. 1915 was the crucial year. A section of *The Saddest Story* had been published in the first (1914) *Blast*, and *The Good Soldier*, as it became, was published entire in 1915; in August of that year Ford became a good soldier himself. Pound wrote jauntily to Harriet Monroe, "Hueffer up in town on leave yesterday. It will be a long time before we get anymore of his stuff, worse luck. He is looking twenty years younger and enjoying his work." The Tietjens books seem a long way off. In the same year Gaudier to Felix Schelling: we have lost one of the best young sculptors and the most promising. The arts will incur no worse loss from the war than this. One is rather obsessed with it."

Pound's uncharacteristic reluctance to go further than this is surprising, though the remark has a number of defensiveness about it. Earlier he had declared: "This war is possibly a conflict between two forces almost equally detestable. Aivism and the loathsome spirit of mediocrity cloaked in graft. . . . One wonders if the war is any stop gap. Only a few documents of the world stopped being enough, though, when a particular death or deaths touched Pound's own world, and his own feelings. It was about such things that he found it hardest to say anything at all. Charles Olson's view, gleaned many years afterwards during visits to Pound in St Elizabeth's, was that "Pound has never got over it. . . . Gaudier's death is the source of his hate for contemporary art and America. . . . In 1915, his attack on democracy got mixed up with Gaudier's death, and all his turn since has been revenge for that boy's death." Pound made a kind of "no more poetry after Auschwitz" statement when, in connection with Hardy, he said that the time has passed "when one could concede such emphasis to the individual elegy and the personal sadness"; yet his *High Selwyn Mauberley* can be read not just as a "funereal" and a "sealing of accounts" as Lindberg-Seydett has it, but also as a personal elegy for Pound's London self and his friend Gaudier, written in the only way Pound thought permissible — beneath its subtly public utterance and its rhetoric of denunciation, the "personal sadness" can be caught.

Though it could hardly be about the war, *The Good Soldier* is heavy with the sense of an ending — there are many deaths in the book, but it is Edward Ashburnham, the figure which conveys the greatest loss. Less than civilization, maybe, but more than a way of life, Pound had little time for Ford's obsession with the Ashburnham type. In one letter he writes: "you hang onto . . . of old, irascible, Shute, Pol, Cuthbert, . . . of a lot of it. . . . It is equally necessary that a writer should have his *clown* filled with terrible plots . . . of ancient, furniture, sentimental, traditional, or bloody, . . . it, the clutter, causes a slide-around just as delirious as the slide-around (verbal) in the Times fit sup."

This reproach dates from 1921. Pound had not taken much heed of a *bad* *de coeur* Ford had addressed to him in 1920 — it led off from "Pound's

extraordinarily selective (and very American) reading of Henry James:

It is not a good frame of mind to get into — this preoccupation with Subject rather than rendering. . . . There is the same tendency in your desire for STRONG STORY and in your objection to renderings of the mania for FURNITURE. . . . having no taste for bric-a-brac you hate to have to read about this passion. . . . But it is one of the main passions of humanity. . . . You might really, just as legitimately object to renderings of the passion of LOVE. . . .

In a way, writing about "his" James, Pound had done just that; and he seems no more in touch with the subtlety and complexity of Ford's "renderings of the passion of LOVE" than he does with James's. In fact there is little even of narrowly literary interest in the letters from the late 1920s on. There are gestures towards magazines and editorial committees, campaigns on behalf of John Crowe Ransom and William Carlos Williams, more generosity from Ford, more recalcitrance from Pound. His heart, simply, was no longer in it; he had begun to look back on the battle of "isms" with the air of a literary historian. He had also, since settling in Rapallo, thrown himself into organizing a series of concerts and recitals, galvanizing local musical talent and interest (he had certainly not lost heart for publicity), drawing players and audiences from further afield. In all of this new activity, and in Pound's life from this time on, a major role was played by the violinist Olga Rudge. Pound's daughter by her, Mary de Rachewiltz, has given in her memoir *Indiscretions* a vivid picture of their domestic circumstances: she speaks of

the stress of almost two years when he was puffed up with two women who loved him, whom he loved, and who coldly hated each other. Whatever the civilized appearances, the polite behaviour and the facade in front of the whole world, their hatred and tension had permeated the house. . . . Until then the attitude towards personal feelings had been somewhat Henry Jamesian: feelings are things other people have. One never spoke of them or showed them.

And "[Pound's] susceptibility to women (and theirs to him) was lifelong": thus Hugh Kenner. We find not a hint of the fact in these letters: feelings were things other people had, just as in the *Cantos* Pound's hell, far from being other people, or himself — as it was for Eliot — is, as Eliot put it, a hell for other people. To speak of the reality Mary de Rachewiltz describes, the poetry has recourse to foreign languages (the ironic thing about such reticence is that it seems both quintessentially English and extremely Jamesian), yet Pound after 1920 found a nearly unremitting contempt for English "habits of thought and feeling" and the misunderstanding, or misrepresented, James as badly as he did Flaubert and Joyce. Pound had also his personal mythology, which appears with remarkable consistency in his work from the juvenilia of *Hilda's Book* to the *Cantos*, *Hilda Doolittle* (H.D., or "Dryad") in *An End to Torment* had written of its earliest stirrings, during her courtship with Pound in the orchards of Wyncote and the tree-house in her father's garden; Charles Tomlinson in his Clark lectures last year made illuminating connections between all this and a different kind of awakening, to Homer and Ovid, also making the point that Pound's "splitting of moments" seems to be a "splitting of myth and life." To some extent Pound lived his mythic gods, nymphs, "maelids", satyrs and nymphs, as real as his own sexual drives, his passion for the natural world — but to some extent they are a defence as well. "I am convinced that Greek myth arose when someone having passed through 'delightful' psychic experience tried to communicate it to himself." From "persecution" he ventured in his early lectures on the spirit of Romanticism. It is the more strange that even in letters to a close and trusted friend he persisted with a complete self-censorship of "fakes" Ford was the last person likely to have persecuted him.

Ford's own life was not without complications, in respect of women other, and it has often been said that

he was an inveterate self-mythologizer, a man for whom the boundaries between memory and invention, the embellishment of an anecdote and the telling of lies, were often blurred. An unsurprising trait in a writer of fiction, it might be argued, and one that is subtly and inextricably bound up with the creation of "unreliable" narrators. But it is also possible to see that this mania for myths of the self had, in Ford, an element of covering his tracks. In many of his letters to Pound, certainly, we hear the voice of a self-created mythical creature, and anyone wishing to know what tracks had to be covered must go to other sources.

Pound would have answered "tram tracks". In his obituary Ford printed here Pound paid him this tribute: "That Ford was almost an hallucinatory few of his intimates can doubt. He felt until it paralyzed his efficient action, he saw quite distinctly the Venus immortal crossing the tram tracks." Nearly twenty years later the spirit of contradiction raises its head again, and in St Elizabeth's he revises the opinion: "The trouble with Fordie was that he couldn't see Venus crossin' the tram tracks." It sounds as if he's talking about himself, but isn't sure, the two of them having shared and differed so much. Whether Pound was almost an hallucinatory few of his readers can be quite confident; one problem is the need to connect feeling with a tram track Venus in the first place, another that he was so often busy with efficient action that it paralyzed his feelings.

Readers who would measure the consequences of this for Pound's achievement must go to the poems and criticism. These letters make their contribution to literary history; after reading them we have a better idea of how Imagism, starting (in Hugh Kenner's words) as a "technical hygiene", came to mean "little more than a way of designating short *vers libre* poems in English", and how both of these were distinct in Pound's mind from his "doctrine of the image" — always closer to the Vortex than to mere pictorial representation: "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. . . . We have to take Pound's word that 'the critical LIGHT during the years immediately pre-war in London shows not from Hulme but from Ford (Madox Ford) in so far as it fell on writing at all, and are not surprised to hear that 'THE EVENT of 1909-10 was Madox Ford (Hueffer) Ford's 'English Review', and no greater consequence of the utter fifth of the whole social system of fact than can be dug up than the fact that a review's passing out of his hands."

No greater condemnation? The sublime assurance that only literature, finally, matters, is the dominant note throughout, apart from the odd politico-economic interlude. Ford's tone is chatty and intimate, so that the reader can believe for whole phrases at a stretch — until the wrong notes become impossible to ignore. That a master class is in progress, with a mellow maestro presiding, Ford is certainly unbuttoned, but buttons aren't always such a bad idea.

Ford's categories overlap and change places, and his generalizations tend to cancel each other out. He lists, for example, without anything as pretentious as evidence, "the four most popular books the world over at any given moment since, say, eighteen-sixty, as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Madame Bovary* (thanks in part to the tireless efforts of French peasants), and two semipitifully changing works of egregious silliness." Yet a little later he asserts that Flaubert (whom he characterizes as a "buoyant and essentially optimistic figure") is "cast out of all French literary practices and inspirations today"; Flaubert must possessive French peasants everywhere as "an English novelist"; just as the novel itself is acquired by Ford with he has pronounced the Art of Writing to be an internationally cooperative affair.

Ford is properly acid about English writers who would rather be called gentlemen than artists; but his own cavalier fabrication of fact is only another way of taking pride in amateurism. Many of his sillinesses rebound against him, in his opinion the really significant point about Shakespeare is the fact that he never corrected his proofs. Ford deduces from this that Shakespeare was really most interested in bombast, and would have liked to write more verse in the



Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound at Rapallo (from the book reviewed here)

In superlative degree

Adam Mars-Jones

FORD MADOX FORD

The English Novel: From the earliest days to the death of Joseph Conrad 148pp. Manchester: Carcanet. Paperback £3.95. 0 85635 480 5

In an age when literary criticism looks more and more like a closed subject, infinitely divorced from the practice of writing, it is refreshing and even reassuring to read a book of criticism by a remarkable and prolific novelist, and to find on every page passages of startling inanity. Perhaps the modish specialists have got it right after all. Bring on the diagrams! Bring on the technical terms!

Ford Madox Ford's short survey (first published in 1930) aims to offer "suggestions not dictates"; but what it delivers is a mass of uncoordinated opinion, much of it masquerading as fact. "The French peasant", we learn at one point, "long ago evolved the rule that life is never either as good or as bad as one expects it to be, and so the French peasant, like every proper man, faces life with composure — and reads *Madame Bovary*, whilst the English, say, lawyer has never got beyond *The Three Musketeers*."

Ford's tone is chatty and intimate, so that the reader can believe for whole phrases at a stretch — until the wrong notes become impossible to ignore. That a master class is in progress, with a mellow maestro presiding, Ford is certainly unbuttoned, but buttons aren't always such a bad idea. Ford's categories overlap and change places, and his generalizations tend to cancel each other out. He lists, for example, without anything as pretentious as evidence, "the four most popular books the world over at any given moment since, say, eighteen-sixty, as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Madame Bovary* (thanks in part to the tireless efforts of French peasants), and two semipitifully changing works of egregious silliness." Yet a little later he asserts that Flaubert (whom he characterizes as a "buoyant and essentially optimistic figure") is "cast out of all French literary practices and inspirations today"; Flaubert must possessive French peasants everywhere as "an English novelist"; just as the novel itself is acquired by Ford with he has pronounced the Art of Writing to be an internationally cooperative affair.

Ford is properly acid about English writers who would rather be called gentlemen than artists; but his own cavalier fabrication of fact is only another way of taking pride in amateurism. Many of his sillinesses rebound against him, in his opinion the really significant point about Shakespeare is the fact that he never corrected his proofs. Ford deduces from this that Shakespeare was really most interested in bombast, and would have liked to write more verse in the

manner of *The Rape of Lucrece* but of turning out the complete masterpieces that popular art demanded.

If it's possible to reconstruct a writer's motives in this way, then he can easily be convicted of preface chitchat, to analysis, and one consistent prejudice. If *Vanity Fair* "the greatest work in the English language" (Chapter 1), then how can *Madame Bovary* be "the greatest of English writers" (Chapter 3)? Where does that leave the Englishman Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale*, which is "the greatest novel ever written" (Chapter 4)? Perhaps Ford cultivates a *Shakespearean attitude towards proof*, but if he doesn't want his reader to remember a hyperbole from chapter to the next, what does he want?

He certainly wants to elevate a goodly crowd to the pinnacle of eminence. Of Richardson he writes: "I know of no other figure in English literature — if it be not that of Tolstoy — who so suggests the two supreme aims of the world — Holbein and Bach." It is perhaps the archetype of little surveys that leads from a declarative opening to a concluding evasion, and justifies one set of prejudicial notes. Richardson, contrary to Ford's opinion, is not a "total occupation" with which other emotions and events, and the claims of his children and friends, can coexist. Or so it seems at the beginning of her bereavement.

The progress of *Perfect Happiness* follows the irregular chronology of a disturbed by excursions into history. Penelope Lively presents the condition as a disease which paralyzes the author and embarrasses other people. In time the patient will recover, though not to her former untroubled health. Frances moves through panic, loneliness and a sort of numbness to the point where she learns about making friends; whom her husband would not have liked.

The contrast with Zoe ought to be instructive. Frances has been the controlling wife and mother, willing her children not to fall off cliffs and answering the telephone with "I'm afraid he's not back yet"; Zoe is the "plain, even ugly" writer whose "sensitivity and sense whine through the jangling. They are united by their affection for each other and for the child. This looks like a warming blanket. The possibilities of women's lives and friendship, but the characters don't quite fill the idea. Finally, despite engaging and sympathetic scenes, Frances stays too bloodless, and Zoe too breezy, for the connection to take place.

There is a parallel hiatus in the action of the novel. The drama-rating is high. It includes death, a test for cancer, storm and flood, death by sex and a terrorist bomb. Yet it has a

FICTION

Ascendancy in decline

Joy Grant

MOLLY KEANE
Time After Time
240pp. André Deutsch. £7.95.
0 233 97387 X

After a long silence, Molly Keane at the age of seventy-seven produced *Good Behaviour*, a novel of immense scope that took a sardonic look at the manners and mores of the financially-embellished Anglo-Irish gentry in the latter half of this century. Now she offers in *Time After Time* a darker comedy, both more bizarre and more schematic. An interplay between past and present is integral to the plot; flashbacks explain character and motive by reference to happenings in the 1920s and '30s (and incidentally enable the author to display her vivid, almost voluptuous sensory awareness of the accessories of civilized living — food, clothes, furnishings — both in the present and a bygone age).

The comedy focuses on the bleaker aspects of human nature; Molly Keane's characters are experts in put-downs, let-downs and snubs. People live in a solipsistic world, pursuing private ends. "They know less than talking about each other," Molly Keane writes of two persons living under one roof. Sisters, moved by the beauty of wild flowers, evade the expression of a shared joy:

a moment came and went when they saw . . . the first scumy primroses . . . their pale complexion lightening the dusk of the cold evening. "Ah, primroses," they both said, it, pleasure hurrying their pulses together. . . . But, because they feared a trite or sweet comment they turned their heads coldly aside from one another.

Adventures into affection end in betrayal. In this atmosphere most

tenderness is expended, not surprisingly, on pets.

One may be less than easy with humour consistently so "wicked", or tire a little of the derisory or caustic tone, yet from this unpromising material Molly Keane has fashioned excellent entertainment: *Time After Time* is an absorbing book.

The central characters are again impecunious Anglo-Irish gentry, the elderly Swifts — three sisters, April, May and "Baby" June, and their brother Jasper — who are obliged for financial reasons to live together in their servantless family mansion. They dislike each other: in uncordial proximity the sisters, while effortlessly and pointedly distinguishing the odours of their respective dogs, do not enter one another's bedrooms; conversation is gripping, spiteful and tart. With the exception of the eldest, the Swifts are single and virgin. April is an unregretful widow ("It's a thing men do. You won't like it", her mother had told her at her wedding, and April never found cause to disagree); in old age she strives to perpetuate her good looks with food fads and aids to beauty, although she has other, more questionable pastimes — secretly selling off the family antiques to a dealer who provides her with "grass". Jasper prepares elegant meals in his unhygienic kitchen (where the bread-board is his tom-cat's habitual seat), and dreams up extravagant plans for his garden; in spare moments he cuts ham sandwiches for a "pretty" fasting monk (the *louché* implications are misleading; the authoress seems to be indulging in Irish coddling at the cold evening. "Ah, primroses," they both said, it, pleasure hurrying their pulses together. . . . But, because they feared a trite or sweet comment they turned their heads coldly aside from one another.

Adventures into affection end in betrayal. In this atmosphere most

her brother's versatile Age), or watching her handsome stable-lad school the one remaining horse.

What, perversely, takes these finely-delineated characters deeper into the territory of black comedy is the fact that each is physically abnormal — one deaf, one maimed, another deformed, the youngest stunted. Into their *ménage* blows cousin Leda, a *revenant* from childhood, an Austrian Jewess on the run from her wartime collaboratorist past; she also is physically abnormal: blind. She is corpulent too, yet pictures herself as still the evilest girl with whom her Uncle Valentine Swift unavocably trifled long ago. Possessing charm, Leda uses it to ingratiate herself with her cousins; she evokes vividly-unforgotten traumas of childhood, and extracts present-day secrets. But when she offers her ample charms to Jasper (his voice reminding her of her first love, Uncle Valentine) she is mortifyingly repulsed. She takes revenge with a wholesale betrayal of confidences. The Swifts quickly recover from the nasty shock; they possess the instinct of their tribe for ignoring unpleasantness, they know how to behave.

Does the Swifts' freakiness (Leda's daughter too is deformed) symbolize some terrible solipsism afflicting the children of the Protestant Ascendancy? Or is it a joke in doubtful taste? Whatever the answer, Molly Keane persuades her reader into shocked acceptance of most, though not all, of her story. In rendering this very elderly authoress two thoughts occur. First, she is bang up to date, and relies the fact; she herself, no doubt (like some of her characters) tunes in to British radio to hear the latest "dreadful news from Ulster". "The Archers", the awfulness of Robin Day". Second, unlike some younger authors, she pays scant attention to the process of ageing; to Molly Keane, aging is clearly a mere incidental to living.

Inheriting identity

Anthony Fothergill

FORD MADOX FORD

The Rash Act
With an Introduction by C. H. Sisson
348pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £6.95.
0 85635 399 X

In *Memories and Impressions* Ford Madox Ford tells of how an aged relative, walking along the Strand, met a lion escaped from a nearby menagerie. "What did you do?" asked Ford. "Do?" asked the relative contemptuously. "Why, I took a cab." It is that sort of grace under pressure, that unthinking self-assuredness which Henry Martin Aluin Smith, the central figure in *The Rash Act*, both lacks and envies. It is also a confidence, Ford suggests, which belongs to an earlier generation, a different cultural milieu. For the novel is set in 1931, a period of economic and social crisis, in which "the prevailing dissoluteness and consequent depression are worldwide" — as the novel's epigraph (quoting from a coroner's report in *The Times*), explaining the "rash act" of suicide, puts it.

Though intended by Ford as the first in a post-war trilogy depicting these novel events, so thoroughly does this fragmented world filtered through the consciousness of Henry Martin, that it achieves a completeness and autonomy of its own. Narrated solely from Martin's viewpoint, and for the most part just as he is about to commit suicide by stepping off a boat in the Mediterranean, the novel is a subtle variation on the theme of the drowning man who sees his life flash before him, but it avoids the conventionality of this by adopting a complicated time structure permitting flashbacks within flashbacks, ironic anticipations and echoes, and by creating a strong sense of a secret sharer; all of which is disconcerting and compelling.

The disinherited son of a wealthy American sweet manufacturer, financially and emotionally devastated, "suspended between nothing and nothing", Henry Martin has (just about) decided to kill himself. He is eventually rescued by another Smith, Hugh Monkton Allard Smith (the initials should be noted), a former army acquaintance, a "glorious young man" of nonchalant manner and enormous wealth (he is also English), with whom Martin would like to

exchange identities; that is precisely what happens. For unlike the American Smith, who evades his own theatrically envisaged suicide, the English one, more despairing than he appears, actually accomplishes his "rash act" — in its own way a death — Henry Martin pretends to be Hugh Monkton to protect his reputation, and finally takes on his identity (as well as his girlfriends).

The contrivance of all this is absorbed by the immediacy with which it is achieved, and though there is a good deal of coincidence, sub-Ford "Do?" asked the relative contemptuously. "Why, I took a cab." It is that sort of grace under pressure, that unthinking self-assuredness which Henry Martin Aluin Smith, the central figure in *The Rash Act*, both lacks and envies. It is also a confidence, Ford suggests, which belongs to an earlier generation, a different cultural milieu. For the novel is set in 1931, a period of economic and social crisis, in which "the prevailing dissoluteness and consequent depression are worldwide" — as the novel's epigraph (quoting from a coroner's report in *The Times*), explaining the "rash act" of suicide, puts it.

There are weaknesses — Ford's choice of a "typical man of the period" as the central (and sometimes dulled) witness, who has a dogged habit of putting the penny in long after it has dropped; the irritating habit of elevating to a stylistic principle the knowing pause . . . which is often not nearly knowing enough; the sometimes sweeping and unconvincing judgments about racial and cultural "hybridization" and "types", and about female sexuality. It could be argued that Ford's narrative mode involves a limited point of view, and thus it is Martin's, not Ford's, sensibility that is in question. But a problem of authorial distance remains, and perhaps Ford's relation to Martin and his world is less than fully assured.

Ford told Ezra Pound that *The Rash Act* "is more like what I wanted to write than anything I have done for years", and later regarded it as his best book. Lacking the intensity and control of *The Good Soldier*, the range of the Tietjens book, it may not deserve that judgment. But it undoubtedly merits this reprinting with C. H. Sisson's useful introduction.

POSTAGE: INLAND 15p ABROAD 17p
SECOND-CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY. PRICE \$7.95. SUBSCRIBERS US BY FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1000 NEW YORK, NY. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO CARCANET, 100 EAST 24 STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10017.

SURVEY OF LONDON

VOLUME XL

Southern Kensington: Brompton

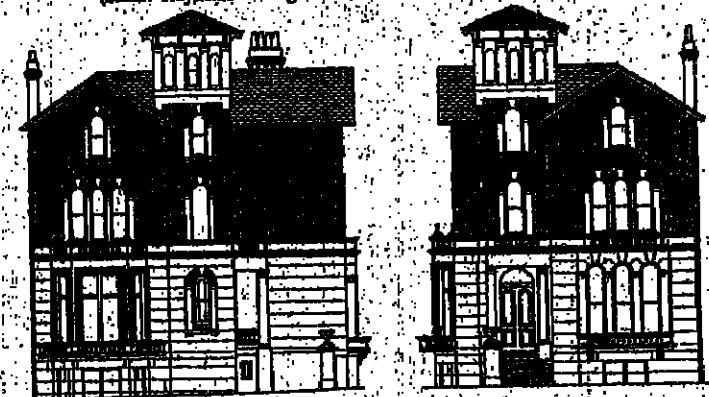
The latest volume of the GLC's *Survey of London* describes an area extending from the bustle of Brompton Road to the sepulchral silence of the Brompton Cemetery. It tells how the idyllic suburbs of pre-Victorian Brompton — a favoured resort of musicians, playwrights, actors and journalists — grew into prosperous South Kensington, with its long westward succession of squares, crescents and "gardens" built in styles changing from stuccoed Italianate to red-brick "Queen Anne". The social character of the residents, as well as the architectural character of the buildings, is analysed, and detailed, carefully illustrated accounts are given of such large and familiar landmarks as Harrods and the Oratory.

318 pages of text, 108 pages of plates, 75 line drawings, coloured frontispiece and end-pocket map. £45

Published for the GLC by The Ashford Press

41, Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4LY

A wealth of material, set forth with scholarship and unobtrusive wit (Susan Reynolds in *English Historical Review* on Volume XL)



Specimen line drawing in text, of No. 24, Giltspur Road

